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# HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

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(JOURNAL OF HIMALAYAN RESEARCH AND CULTURAL FOUNDATION)  
NGO in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC, United Nations

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Vol. 21 No. 2-3

April-September 2017

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## AFGHANISTAN SPECIAL

BUDDHIST HERITAGE OF AFGHANISTAN

*Sunita Dwivedi*

THE DETERMINANTS OF AFGHANISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

*Mirwais Balkhi*

AFGHANISTAN-CENTRAL ASIA RELATIONS

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AFGHANISTAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PAKISTAN

*Mohammad Hanif Sharifi*

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## HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

**Editor : K. WARIKOO**

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<b>SUBSCRIPTION</b>			
<b>IN INDIA</b>			
Single Copy (Individual)	:	Rs.	500.00
Annual (Individual)	:	Rs.	1000.00
Institutions & Libraries (Annual)	:	Rs.	1400.00
<b>OVERSEAS (AIRMAIL)</b>			
Single Copy	:	US \$	30.00
		UK £	20.00
Annual (Individual)	:	US \$	60.00
		UK £	40.00
Institutions & Libraries (Annual)	:	US \$	100.00
		UK £	70.00

*Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*  
is included within the *ProQuest* products

*Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*  
is included and abstracted in *Worldwide Political Science*  
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**HIMALAYAN RESEARCH AND CULTURAL FOUNDATION,**  
*B-6/86, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi - 110029 (India)*

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Printed and published by Prof. K. Warikoo on behalf of the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation, B-6/86, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi-110029. Distributed by Anamika Publishers & Distributors (P) Ltd, 4697/3, 21-A, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. Printed at Nagri Printers, Delhi-110032.

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Vol. 21, No. 2-3

April-September 2017

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**HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES** is a quarterly Journal published by the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation, which is a non-governmental, non-profit research, cultural and development facilitative organisation. The Journal is devoted to the study of various issues pertaining to the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan region in South and Central Asia or parts thereof, connected with its environment, resources, history, art and culture, language and literature, demography, social structures, communication, tourism, regional development, governance, human rights, geopolitics etc.

While the principal concern of the Journal is on its focal area, i.e., from Afghanistan to Myanmar including the Central Asian states of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, China, Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan and the Indian Himalayan States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and North East states; papers with a broad sweep addressing environmental, social, cultural, economic, geopolitical and human rights issues are also welcomed.

The objective is to make a scientific appraisal of the issues confronting the Himalayan and adjoining region in South and Central Asia or parts thereof, and to make specific policy oriented studies and need based recommendations as the means to promote the human, educational and economic advancement of the peoples of the region besides preserving and enriching their ethno-cultural, literary and historical heritage. Promotion of human rights, social justice, peace, harmony and national integration are the other key areas in which the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation has been active.

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SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO :**

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New Delhi - 110029 (India)

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**Website: [www.himalayanresearch.org](http://www.himalayanresearch.org)**

*Books for review should be sent to the same address.*

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers R.No. 67256/97

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### *Editor's Page*

Located at the crossroads of Central, South and West Asia and sharing its borders with Central Asian Republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan on the north, Chinese province of Xinjiang in the east, Iran on the west and south west, and Pakistan and Pak-occupied Kashmir on the south and south east, Afghanistan occupies a unique geo-strategic placement in the region. Being a point of contact between Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia and West Asia, Afghanistan is striving to develop as a transit hub for ensuring a smooth transit of people, trade, energy and goods in and around the massive region.

Even though war against terror in Afghanistan was launched over sixteen years ago, many basic freedoms – from insecurity, fear and poverty are yet to be achieved. The battle between the forces of democratisation and those of destabilisation in post-Taliban Afghanistan is still continuing. Reports of kidnappings, ambushes, killings, rocket attacks and bomb explosions in Afghanistan have been coming almost daily. The threat to security in Afghanistan is from the attacks by the resurgent Taliban and of late by IS extremists. Sixteen years after 9/11, the situation in Afghanistan remains unstable due to increasing insecurity, and rise in deadly attacks by the Taliban and the IS. The Taliban have strengthened and have been operating both from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan continues its links and manipulation of the Taliban and allied groups, whether in the field or in the negotiation process between Kabul, US and the Taliban. The US military commanders and intelligence agencies have repeatedly pointed to the safe sanctuaries, ideological infrastructure and operational bases provided by Pakistan to the Taliban and Haqqani network to launch their terror attacks in Afghanistan. This is despite the fact that Pakistan has received over 33 billion dollars of US military and economic assistance in the name of fighting terrorism.

The year 2016 witnessed increase in terror attacks leading to over 11,000 deaths and injuries of men, women and children. The Taliban and Haqqani network carried out deadly attacks by detonating a truck laden with explosives in Kabul on 19 April 2016, killing 71 civilians and injuring 367 others. Islamic State or Daesh- Khorasan Province claimed



responsibility for a suicide attack against a peaceful procession of Shia Hazaras in Kabul on 23 July 2016. During the attack, 85 civilians were killed and 413 injured. On 11 October 2016, a Daesh suicide attacker fired indiscriminately at Karte Shakhi Shia mosque in Kabul killing 19 people and injuring 60 others. On 21 November 2016 Daesh carried out a suicide bomb attack at a Shia mosque in Kabul killing 40 civilians and injuring 74 others. A truck bomb attack in Kabul on 31 May 2017 left over 150 persons dead and hundreds injured. The US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) in its February 2017 report to the US Congress stated that "the Taliban controls 11 districts and influences 34 of Afghanistan's 407 districts (11 per cent), while the Afghan government controls 97 districts and influences 146 (60 per cent)". The Taliban presence in the two strategic southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand is disturbing. Even in the north, where the Taliban have been traditionally weak, the key city of Kunduz has come under attack. In April 2017 the Taliban attacked a major Afghan army base near Mazar-e-Sharif killing 170 soldiers. So ensuring sustainable security and peace in Afghanistan is a great challenge facing the international community. This can be achieved only by total destruction of Taliban and the ISIS and their infrastructure still existent and operational in various parts of the world. International community needs to shed its ambivalence and evolve a concerted strategy to curb terrorism and extremism in and around Afghanistan by stopping their sources of funds, arms, logistics and training and ideological motivation. That the current US President Donald Trump has announced his new Afghanistan strategy on 22 August 2017 clearly pointing to the problems created by Pakistan, marks a shift in the US policy towards South Asia. It is hoped that US will be now active in defeating and eliminating the dark forces of extremism and terrorism represented by the Taliban and the ISIS and their networks, only after which a stable, peaceful and democratic Afghanistan can emerge.

Pakistan has set its strategic goals in the region: having a client regime in Afghanistan; to neutralise the demand of Pashtunistan; to secure coveted overland access to Central Asia; and establishing 'strategic depth' against India using Afghanistan. Though Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani made overtures to Pakistan hoping any moderation in Pakistan's policy in favour of peace and security, he soon became disenchanted due to the failed peace negotiations with the Taliban and regular terror attacks in Afghanistan. At the sixth ministerial conference of the Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) on Afghanistan held in Amritsar, India on 4

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December 2016, both the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi voiced their concern over common issues such as terrorism and trade connectivity in the region. In fact Ashraf Ghani was more blunt and he mocked at Pakistan's financial assistance of \$500 million to Afghanistan. Ghani derisively advised Pakistani Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz to spend it on stopping "cross-border terrorism" instead.

Whereas India has pumped over 2 billion US dollars of assistance into Afghanistan, it lacks both strategic and military muscle in Afghanistan. India did well in spending its assistance for numerous infrastructure projects in Afghanistan, including the construction of roads, the new Afghan parliament complex and the Salma Dam (officially, the Afghan-India Friendship Dam); the establishment of the Afghan National Agricultural Sciences and Technology University (ANASTU); and investments in small development projects and skill-building related initiatives.

Pakistan has been steadfastly refusing transit access to Indian goods and materials including humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, through its territory. Pakistan has been consistent in its policy of blocking the overland Central Asia-Afghanistan-Pakistan corridor to India for import of energy resources and export of Indian goods. Pakistan did not even grant India any transit access to send even its humanitarian assistance in the form of wheat and other commodities to Afghanistan. The Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade Transit Agreement, which was finalized on 19 July 2010 in the presence of US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, while allowing Afghan trucks to carry goods to the Wagah border for onward dispatch to India, does not allow these trucks to carry back Indian goods to Afghanistan. To overcome the obstacle of land contiguity posed by Pakistan, the India-Afghanistan Air Freight Corridor became operational in June 2017, which has shipped agricultural produce, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment etc. Earlier in 2016, India, Iran and Afghanistan signed the Trilateral Agreement on Establishment of International Transport and Transit Corridor (the Chabahar Agreement)

The reconstruction of collapsed social and economic infrastructure and development of Afghanistan as the transit hub of regional trade and traffic, will help in putting the social and economic situation in Afghanistan back on tracks, though the process is cumbersome and long drawn. International agencies like United Nations, World Bank, European Union etc. need to implement the reconstruction programmes employing

professional and committed cadres in coordination with the local agencies/ personnel. The future of Afghanistan with guarantees of peace, security and well being of its people hinges upon the success of the de-Talibanisation process, the success of reconciliation between rival ethnic/ regional Afghan political groups and commanders, emergence of a balanced and broad-based stable government representing diverse ethnic, regional and minority interests, the setting up and effective functioning of law enforcement agencies, strengthening the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces by having a robust vetting process in place to prevent members of armed groups involved in crimes from being recruited by security or government institutions, on the speedy implementation of reconstruction of social, economic and education infrastructure, and on elimination of drugs and arms trafficking from Afghanistan.

**K. Warikoo**

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## BUDDHIST HERITAGE OF AFGHANISTAN

SUNITA DWIVEDI

Without Afghanistan, the history of Buddhism and Buddhist art in Asia would be incomplete. We have written records of various monks, pilgrims and scholars indicating the location of ancient Buddhist establishments in Afghanistan from whose ruins modern archaeologists have excavated thousands of artefacts that are today exhibited in museums around the world. The National Museum of Afghanistan has the place of pride for its collection and display of rare Buddhist antiquities in its various halls. Ancient manuscripts recovered from Buddhist sites and preserved as the *Shoyen Collection* in the library of the museum are a scholar's delight.

Unfortunately many Buddhist antiquities were stolen, destroyed or lost during the years of civil strife in Afghanistan. During the political turmoil of the 1970's many objects were looted or destroyed.<sup>1</sup> What still remains at the ruined sites and at the National Museum at Kabul brings to life the glories of ancient Afghanistan as the prime land where the faith of the Buddha flourished for over a millennium, where the first stupa for Buddha's relics was built at Balkh, where the first image of the Buddha took its breath at Gandhara and where eminent scholars preached and practised the *Dhamma* spreading it beyond into the land of Central Asia and China through a myriad routes.

It was in the region of Gandhara comprising eastern Afghanistan and north-western Pakistan that Buddhist art is believed to have originated in the second or the first century BC under the Greco-Roman and Hellenistic influence and lasted until the 5th or the 6th century AD. It was from Gandhara that it spread to the regions of eastern Iran and gradually northwards into Bactria and Sogdiana regions of Central Asia and onwards to China.<sup>2</sup>

The ancient *Uttarapath*, or the Mauryan Highway from Patliputra to Taxila<sup>3</sup> and onwards to Bamiyan and Balkh was in ancient times the main

route from India into Central Asia. It was along this highway that the message of the Buddha reached the territory of Afghanistan, where it flourished in huge monastic establishments.

It is believed that Buddhism first arrived in Afghanistan in 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC with the establishment of the Mauryan empire in India which also controlled the area south of the Hindukush upto about 185 BC. This happened as a result of a treaty signed in 305 BC by which Seleucus Nikator, the successor to Alexander, ceded territories to Chandragupta Maurya in return for his daughter's marriage to Chandragupta and 500 elephants. With this, the trade routes passing through Baluchistan, Makran and Afghanistan came under Mauryan control.<sup>4</sup>

At the time of Bindusara's (Chandragupta's son) death in 272 BC, a large part of the Indian sub-continent was under Mauryan suzerainty.<sup>5</sup> It was during Asoka's (Bindusara's son) reign that the Buddhist Sangha at the Third Buddhist Council at Patliputra in 250 BC decided to send missionaries to various parts of the sub-continent for the propagation of Buddhism.<sup>6</sup> Following this, monastic establishments came up all along the trade route through northwest India (now Pakistan) and Afghanistan. As a result several Asokan inscriptions have been found in Afghanistan. One written in Aramaic was found in Jalalabad district. Two bilingual inscriptions written in Greek and Aramaic were found at Shar-i-kona near Kandahar. Four Asokan edicts were found in the province of Lamghan.<sup>7</sup>

Among other kings who patronised Buddhism were the Indo-Greek king, Menander and Kushan king Kanishka. Menander ruling from 150 to 135 BC, in north-west India and southern Afghanistan is best remembered as Milind in the Buddhist text *Milindpanha*.<sup>8</sup> Kushan king Kanishka, is fondly cherished by the Buddhists as the greatest king after Asoka. His accession to the Kushan throne has been placed at 78 AD.<sup>9</sup> The Kushan empire included large tracts on both sides of the Hindukush mountains.

The antiquity of Buddhism in Afghanistan digs even further in the past. In 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., two travellers from Bhallika (Balkh) by the name of Trapussa and Bhallika came to India for trade and met the Buddha after his Enlightenment at Bodhgaya. They were the first lay disciples of the Buddha, and are said to have built the first stupas at Balkh. This has been mentioned in the memoirs of the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang who visited Afghanistan in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE.<sup>10</sup>

The religion received a blow with the spread of Islam in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

Its demise came with the Ghaznavids who conquered the Kabul valley in 11<sup>th</sup> century. Shahi king Jayapala ruling over extensive territories of eastern Afghanistan and north-western India (now Pakistan) between 964-1001 CE faced the brunt of Islamic attack. He tried to contain the rising power of the Ghaznavid ruler Sabuktigin and later his son Mahmud (of Ghazni) by forming a confederacy of Pratihara rulers of India but lost crucial battles against them in 991 and 1001 A.D. As a result Buddhist institutions that had flourished for over a millennium in Afghanistan saw complete destruction.<sup>11</sup>

A traveller to Afghanistan can today see the ruins of monastic establishments dotting the landscape and mountain caves that once held huge images of the Buddha in rock cut niches and had their walls painted with beautiful murals depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha.

#### MONASTERY AT KUNDUZ

If we follow the pilgrim route through Central Asia southwards into Afghanistan we will see that there were many routes across the river Oxus directly entering the northern regions of Afghanistan. The Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (Hieun Tsinang) had taken the Kunduz - Jalalabad route on his way to India in 629/630 CE. We notice that the pilgrim on arriving at Termez (Uzbekistan) had avoided the shortest route into Afghan territory through Arytam/ Hairatan- two parts of the same village on the Oxus river in the region of Balkh. Instead the pilgrim took a long detour through territory that is now Tajikistan most certainly to see the various monastic centres on the route and offer worship. He was in no hurry to cross into Balkh although the most famous monastery of Navavihara (Naubahar) was located there. There was a river crossing at the Arytam village even in ancient times, where we now have the modern Friendship Bridge going into Mazar-e-Sharif, close to ancient Balkh. Instead the pilgrim travelling eastwards crossed into the region of Chaganian and onwards to the country of Vakhsh and Khuttal. From here he crossed the Oxus on the south and came to several kingdoms (of Afghanistan) before he reached Kunduz, the country of Hwo.<sup>12</sup>

The monastery at Kunduz in the 7<sup>th</sup> century was renowned for its scholastic achievements. Its fame having spread far and wide but chiefly in the Turkestan region of China in the oases cities of the Taklamakan desert. Some of the most renowned scholars of Buddhism resided at the monastery. Therefore Xuanzang reached Kunduz to present his letter of

credentials (which he had obtained from the Khagan of the Western Turk) to his son, the prince Ta-tu-sheh, ruling over Kunduz and neighbouring regions. He also wanted to have a religious discourse with the renowned monk scholar Dharmasinha of the Kunduz monastic centre.

We are informed by the pilgrim in his memoirs that on account of the prince Tatusheh's sickness and death due to poisoning he was detained at Kunduz for about a month. This gave him an opportunity to explore the status of Buddhism in Kunduz. Xuanzang supplies us with interesting information about the condition of Buddhism in 7<sup>th</sup> century at Kunduz. He tells us that in Kunduz there were about ten monasteries with about a hundred monks and both Mahayana and Hinayana sects prevailed.<sup>13</sup> At the monastic centre in Kunduz, the most revered scholar monk Dharmasinha, who was well versed in Vibhasha, was the head and resided there with his many disciples. He had travelled to India for Buddhist studies. He was called the 'artisan of law' or the law maker and was renowned among the priests of Kashgar, Khotan and Yutien.<sup>14</sup>

Significantly, at Kunduz the tradition of the Maitreya Buddha appears to have been strong. This was confirmed when a splendid bejewelled image of the Maitreya was found here. The people worshipped the Maitreya-the Future Buddha who, according to Buddhist traditions, resided in the Tushita or the Buddhist heaven waiting to descend into the human realm when the time came. He was the Universal Buddha and with his unbounded kindness and all-encompassing love, he would deliver mankind from miseries. According to historian Romila Thapar, the Dharmaguptaka sect, although not conforming to the Mahayana school, accepted some of its teachings, for example anticipating the coming of the Maitreya.<sup>15</sup>

The beautiful Maitreya image from Kunduz monastic centre (perhaps one visited by the Chinese pilgrim) can today be seen at the National Museum, Kabul. The Buddha is seated with both feet crossed at the ankles on a pedestal or a throne. He is dressed in the robes of a *bhikshu* and decorated with heavy jewels. The earrings hang upto the shoulders and a four layered garland with a beautifully designed pendant reaches his chest. There are bracelets around the wrist. The head dress, in the shape of a jewelled crown holds within its folds, what seems to be a conical terraced stupa- believed to be a symbolic reliquary for the holy relics of the Shakyamuni Buddha. The stupa appears to emit light/ or flames marked by carved bands emerging from it. It helps us to identify the image of Maitreya Buddha. A decorated halo with geometrical motifs on the edges

adorns the back of the head.

### NAVASANGHARAMA OF BALKH

When Xuanzang came to Balkh, he stayed at the New Monastery or the NavVihara/Naubahar for a month, and has described it as one of the most splendid monasteries of the Buddhist world. The pilgrim talks of Balkh as the 'little Rajgriha', the name probably stemming from the flourishing state of Buddhism there with 100 convents and 3,000 monks.<sup>16</sup>

At the Navasangharama or the New Monastery, Xuanzang saw the great statue of the Buddha which shone by virtue of the precious gems studded into it. It stood in a hall which was also embellished with rare precious gems. There was also a statue of Vaisravana Deva, who protected the convent. In the Hall of the Buddha, the pilgrim mentioned a dazzling multi-coloured wash basin used by the Buddha. Not far away, the pilgrim informs, lay the yellowish-white shining tooth of the Buddha, about an inch long. The sweeping brush of the Buddha, made of the plant 'ka-she' (or kusha grass), with a gem-laden handle was also kept here. To the north of the convent, he saw a stupa about 200 ft high, reflecting a divine splendour and enclosing a sacred relic. The stupa was covered with a plaster 'as hard as diamonds'.<sup>17</sup>

Near the village of Aibak, in Samangan, close to Balkh are located two Buddhist sites of Takht-e-Rustam and Top-e-Rustam. It is in the ruins of these monastic settlements that scholars have traced the existence of the ancient Naubahar monastery which Xuanzang mentioned in his travelogues. The stupa of Takht-e-Rustam is said to have been built in the 2nd century A.D. The edges of the stupa are smooth and spherical. The base that is embedded in the rocky soil has long grooves leading into underground water tanks. It is said that the grooves were meant to divert melting ice water into the tanks to be used for drinking. The stupa seems to have been cut out of a huge cliff.

The *pradakshina* path (circumambulatory corridor) around the stupa is wide enough for two persons to walk side by side, hemmed in between the stupa and the rock wall. The main entrance to the stupa is a wide path along both sides of which lie deep and large caves with windows. The visitors can explore a few caves, but many more interconnected hidden caves also lie within the rocks surrounding the stupa. The natural caves have low roofs but are wide enough for a dozen worshippers to be had been seated. The size of the huge stupa, its grandeur, and the multiple



caves cut alongside the circumambulatory corridor to accommodate the large multitude of worshipping monks are evidence of the importance accorded to this site. A rectangular structure with a high empty niche stands over the stupa. Perhaps this niche held the *triratna* or a *chhatra*. Or it could have held an image of the Buddha.

Another hill stands close to the stupa. Inside, lie massive rectangular and circular halls, courtyards, and galleries whose walls have been decorated with floral motifs. There are deep-arched niches and on the floor are water bodies cut into the rocks. The interconnected galleries do not seem to be natural; the galleries, halls and walls were certainly carved by humans.

After crossing an open courtyard, one comes to an almost circular cave where a *kund* (cool water body) has been cut into the floor. Perhaps some stream was led into the tank and the water was stored for drinking purposes. On the walls are vestiges of floral carvings. There are huge niches inside, where large images of the Buddha once stood. Over the top of one particularly large arched niche is a huge carving of a tree that resembles the *peepal* - the Bodhi, the tree of wisdom. Under this tree, the niche perhaps held the image of the Buddha in deep meditation. Several lotus flowers are carved on the adjacent walls. They are similar to the lotuses under the feet of the Buddha portrayed at the Chankama at Bodhgaya, which symbolise the seven steps taken by the Buddha after his Enlightenment.

Galleries connect one part of the hill to another and lead into large congregational halls. One of the several halls into which a gallery opens appears to be several hundred feet long and at least 20 feet wide. There are numerous arches and a broad *sufa* along the walls. Here, several hundred monks could be seated for a congregation, all facing the stupa on the other hill. Along the galleries are cut deep alcoves for Buddha images that once decorated the entire monastic settlement. From the size of the hill and the number of large halls and connecting galleries, it can be presumed that several hundred monks lived in the monastic settlement.

#### CAVE MONASTERIES OF BAMMIAN

Buddhist monks are believed to have settled in the Bamiyan Valley during the Kushan period or even earlier, turning it into a major monastic centre. Itinerant monks from the Buddhist centres of India perhaps settled there during the time of the Mauryan emperor Asoka's *Dhamma* missions to the Greek kingdoms of Central Asia. Two immense rock statues of the Buddha,

believed to represent 'Lokottara', the 'Lord of the World'<sup>18</sup> once dominated the Buddhist complex. Thousands of cave shrines, assembly halls and residences for monks were carved out of cliffs between the two giant Buddhas and were decorated with paintings. The Buddha colossi were dated between the 3rd and the 4th centuries.<sup>19</sup> Today these are represented by dark empty niches standing like tall shadows in the face of the beautiful BamIyan mountains.

The Chinese pilgrim, Xuanzang, visited the area in 630 A.D., and his writings include the two colossi. He also mentions ten religious foundations with several thousand priests belonging to the Hinayana sect of Buddhism.<sup>20</sup> According to the traveller, one statue was 150 feet high while the other was 100 feet high, both standing figures of stone on the declivity of the hill. Xuanzang also spoke of a Reclining Buddha of about 1,000 feet in length within the monastic settlement.

The giant Buddhas stood guard over the valley for over a millennium and a half before being blown up in March 2001 by the Taliban. Today the Afghanistan Institute of Archaeology, the Japanese research team from the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties and the Delegation Archaeologique Francaise en Afghanistan (DAFA) are at the site to take special care of the cave paintings and further research and explorations at the site. Interestingly, the local populace of BamIyan is excited by the news of the discovery of a 19-metre Reclining Buddha by renowned Afghan-French archaeologist Dr Zmaryalai Tarzi. Dr Tarzi and his team of French archaeologists from DAFA have been searching for the 1,000-ft long Reclining Buddha at Bamiyan, mentioned in the memoirs of Hieun Tsiang.

The nearby Kakrak Valley is renowned for its pictorial art. Some paintings of 'mystic mandala' found in the caves of the Kakrak Valley have been displayed at the National Museum, Kabul. The mandalas depict the central image of the Buddha believed to be 'Vairochna', surrounded by a galaxy of smaller Buddhas. An outstanding painting from the Kakrak Valley is the *Hunter King* who having renounced violence took refuge with the Buddha. The painting once adorned the drum of a dome at Kakrak. Now displayed at the museum, it portrays a royal personage, presumably the Buddhist king of Bamiyan, worshipping a stupa. The sovereign, bejewelled and adorned in fabulous robes, wears a crown with three crescents, perhaps symbolising the *triratna* of the *Buddha, Dhamma* and the *Sangha*.

A third centre of Buddhist art is situated in the Foladi Valley at the western entrance of the Bamiyan caves. The caves present an excellent

example of stone carvings and mural paintings. The local story is that the mountain was once the home of a Kushan prince who had built a palace inside the hillside, the rock being cut to give way to galleries, large halls and residential quarters with verandahs. The walls and roof of the rooms were richly decorated with paintings, whose colours were made by grinding local mineral rock stones like malachite, azurite, lapis, cinnabar etc. Some supporting structures of the verandahs have crumbled, exposing the remains of a richly painted roof with geometrical design and rows of Buddha images. The colours are still bright even though centuries have elapsed since they were created. Some painted walls lay deep inside the mountains.

#### KAPISA/BEGRAM

We learn from Xuanzang that in Kapisa there were some 100 monasteries with 6,000 priests. Renowned scholars of Buddhism lived here. Congregations were held where important questions regarding the Buddhist doctrine were discussed and debated. The story of a Chinese prince taken hostage and kept at Kapisa is related by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang. He informs<sup>21</sup> that the temple of Sha-lo-kia belonged to the 'Little Vehicle' and was originally built by a son of the Han emperor who had been held hostage here. Xuanzang's narration about the hostage could well be true as the Kushan king Kanishka was known to have hostages from China in his court. Kanishka is credited with success in war against the Chinese. He conquered the rich Chinese provinces of Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan and hostages from a Chinese principality lived in his court.<sup>22</sup> His western capital was at Kapisa and eastern capital at Purushapura (Peshawar).

The monastic institutions at Kapisa belonged to the 'Little Vehicle' as well as to the 'Great Vehicle'. The king of Kapisa and all the priests went to receive the pilgrim when he arrived here. Each monastery was competing to invite the pilgrim. But Xuanzang and monk Prajnakara stayed in the temple of Sholokia of the 'Little Vehicle' which housed a stupa. Here they spent the 'Varshavaasa' or the Rainy Season retreat.<sup>23</sup>

We also learn from the pilgrim that a five-day religious congregation was held in the temple of Shalokia (believed to be at Shotorak). Here in this convent lived three great Buddhist priests viz. Master of three Pitakas, Manojaghosh, Aryaverma of the *Sarvastivadin* School and another priest Gunabhadra. The Chinese pilgrim participated in the congregation

alongwith monk Prajnakara. He also addressed the congregation and answered all questions regarding the Buddhist doctrine, put to him by scholars.

In 1923 DAFA archaeologist Alfred Foucher started exploring Begram. According to him Begram is Kapisi, the ancient capital city of Kapisa region. In 1936 the DAFA began excavations in the 'New Royal City'. Further excavations took place in 1937 and 1939 when the famous Begram Treasure was discovered in two walled rooms number 10 and 13.<sup>24</sup>

The theme of the 'Miracle of Sravasti' was famous in the art of Afghanistan, especially at Kapisa and region of Kabul from where several Buddha images were recovered depicting Buddha performing the great miracle. A life size Buddha image from Shotorak site, a few kilometres north of the old Begram city overlooking the Panjshir river, can today be seen at the National Museum at Kabul. It is a headless image in schist dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD. The Buddha in 'abhay mudra' is a life size. From his feet a stream of water is flowing. Interestingly the image is titled 'Miracle of Sravasti' pointing to the event in Buddha's life outside the monastery at Sravasti when the Buddha performed the great miracle to prove his power when challenged by heretics.

Another life size Buddha image, found at Kham-i-Zargar site and dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD is also prominently displayed at the museum. The Buddhist complex was reportedly found near Gulbahar at the foot of Kuh-i-Kham-i-Zargar. The image bears the title 'Miracle of Sravasti'. The Buddha in 'Abhay Mudra' has an embossed dot in the palm of his right hand indicating the 'Wheel of Life'. Flames erupt from his shoulders and streams of water flow from his feet.

Two major works of Buddhist iconography were found at the Shotorak. One piece carved in slate dates from the 2<sup>nd</sup> AD or 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD depicting the legend of the adoration of the Buddha by three Kashyap brothers. The other was a bas-relief depicting the Dipankar Jataka 83.5 cms tall and dating from the same period. On the evening of December 31, 1992 the legendary pieces were stolen from the upper storey of the museum.<sup>25</sup>

#### LAMGHAN, NAGARHARA, HADDA

The region of eastern Afghanistan was important to any pilgrim coming to India. The Silk Route passed through here onto the Khyber Pass into

Peshawar and onwards to Taxila. Besides, some of the most important Buddhist establishments were located here viz. of Lamghan, Nagarhara and Hadda. These were famous throughout the Buddhist world as important relics of the Buddha were kept here. The parietal bone of the Buddha in Hadda and his tooth relic in the city of Nagarhara were among the famous objects of worship. The Buddha's robe and staff were also sacred relics in Nagarhara.

A stucco panel found at a monastery in Nagarhara, shows a royal procession led by the Buddhist king of the city. The king is accompanied by monks carrying the relics of the Buddha on an elephant. The panel displayed at the National Museum recreates the scene of the Buddhist period of Afghanistan when royal processions were organised, much like the Buddhist festival and procession of images in Khotan, as mentioned by Chinese pilgrim Faxian in his memoirs *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms* (Translated by James Legge, 1886) during his stay at the Gomati monastery. The stucco panel shows a royal personage, over whose head an attendant holds an umbrella. Accompanied by monks, he leads an elephant carrying on his back a huge square shaped carved box, perhaps holding the relics of the Buddha. The precious relics were publicly exhibited to the worshippers and common city dwellers on auspicious days. The king himself led the procession of monks followed by royal, caprisoned elephants carrying the relics of the Buddha on their back.

Valuable Buddhist scrolls on birch-bark packed into earthen pots were found in the library of a monastery in Gandhara, believed to be a monastery in Hadda.<sup>26</sup> The text composed in the 'Gandhari Prakritinkharoshthi script' have been dated to about the first century AD. The texts are believed to be parts of the Buddhist Canon and associated with the 'Dharamguptaka sect of Buddhism'.<sup>27</sup>

Since this was an important region being the hub of trade and commerce by virtue of its position on the Silk Road, Mauryan emperor Asoka found the region a strategic place for his inscriptions. One written in Aramaic was recovered from Jalalabad district.<sup>28</sup> Four Asokan edicts were found at a site between villages Shalatak and Qargha in the province of Lamghan.<sup>29</sup> C.S. Upasaka mentions one epigraph found at Jalalabad<sup>30</sup> bearing the name of the famous Indo-Greek Buddhist king Menander who ruled over Afghanistan during 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

We read in Xuanzang's memoirs<sup>31</sup> that during his journey from Lamghan through Nagarhara and Hadda he came across a number of important monastic centres. In Lamghan there were ten monasteries and

the priests were followers of the 'Great Vehicle'. From here going south, the pilgrim arrived at Nagarhara where he saw a 300 feet high stupa built by Asoka. It marked the place where Sakya bodhisattva met Dipankar Buddha.

Hadda, near modern Jalalabad was the site of one of the largest Buddhist centers in Afghanistan, and as such was visited and described by the Chinese pilgrims. Here was preserved Buddha's skull bone in a jewelled box inside a stupa made of seven precious substances. There was also a tower of the skull bone shaped like a lotus leaf. The eyeball of the Buddha and also his *Sanghati* robe and staff were also preserved here.<sup>32</sup> What happened to these relics no one can tell. Interestingly Xinru Liu in *Silk and Religion*<sup>33</sup> mentions about a Chinese pilgrim Wu'kung who is said to have carried away the Buddha's tooth relic to China where he was granted official position and honours. In the 7th century AD the rulers of Kapisa happily parted with the 'small parietal bone (presumably of the Buddha) in exchange for 4,000 bolts of silk, writes Xinru Liu.<sup>34</sup>

Remains of numerous monasteries, stupas, sanctuaries and artificial caves are reported to have been found in the region of Hadda. Unfortunately much of the antiquities found in the region of Hadda were destroyed when the museum at Hadda was plundered and burned in 1981. The many treasures excavated by archaeologists from various sites at Hadda and kept at Jalalabad were looted and were lost forever.<sup>35</sup> Among the salvaged antiquities from Hadda is a superb terracotta image of the 'Smiling Buddha' published by the National Museum. The image was photographed at the moment of its unwrapping at the presidential palace, Kabul in 2004 and appeared in a museum publication.<sup>36</sup> A relic casket of gold inlaid with precious rubies and carved with the figures of the Buddha and bodhisattvas was recovered from a stupa in Bimaran, near Jalalabad.<sup>37</sup>

**Guldara Stupa**, was found 22 km south of Kabul, not far from the village of Guldara (Gol Darreh) known as the 'Valley of Flowers' on a high hill. It has been dated to the 2nd century AD. Gold coins date to the Kushan period viz. Vima Kadphises (r 113-127 AD) and Huvishka (r150-190 AD). These were recovered along with some gold ornaments when the British explorer Charles Masson opened the stupa chamber in the 19th century.

A huge banner depicting the stupa at Guldara greets the visitor to the National Museum at Kabul. The large stupa made of rough stone and mud has a square base with a central niche which once must have held

an image of the Buddha. Motif of Corinthian columns decorated the base. Niches on the drum were meant to hold images or lighting of lamps. According to historian- explorer Nancy Hatch Dupree the entire stupa was originally plastered and painted ochre-yellow with red designs. Dupree also informs of a monastic establishment nearby.<sup>38</sup>

#### **'BODHISATTVA SIDDHARTH' FROM TEPE-MARANJAN**

On Maranjan Hill, east of Bala Hisar, Kabul once lay the large Buddhist monastery complex of Tepe- Maranjan.<sup>39</sup> Among the many sculptures found here was a life size image of the Sitting Bodhisattva, now at display at the National Museum at Kabul. The painted clay statue titled 'Bodhisattva Siddharth'- the royal prince has been dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The peculiar headdress like a wreath of flowers once held a large precious stone hanging on the forehead. The neck is adorned by two layers of necklace, one clasping the neck while the second hanging low on the chest. The posture is that of meditation. Traces of polychrome is visible on the surface.

#### **'MIRACLE OF SRAVASTI' FROM SARAI KHUJA**

The site of Sarai Khuja lies 33 kilometers north of Kabul. According to a museum notice a large image of the Standing Buddha performing the 'Miracle of Sravasti' was found here accidentally in 1965. It was dated between the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD. In the art of Sarai Khuja too we see this favoured theme of the depiction of the 'Miracle of Sravasti' on stone. At the National Museum we can see the life-size image of Buddha in schist depicting the Buddha in 'Abhay Mudra', flames of fire arising from his shoulders while water flows from his feet. His garb is in low relief and indicated by just parallel lines on his body. On one side of the Buddha mythological creatures and plants can be seen. At the bottom of the image, six figures can be seen coming out of lotuses looking up at the Buddha.

This famous Buddha from Sarai Khuja was among the artifacts looted from the museum during 1990-1994. A museum notice informs that a Japanese dealer bought the image and resold it to a UK dealer who bought it with the help of the British Museum. It was returned to the National Museum of Afghanistan in memory of Carla Grissman who had served the museum and worked for the preservation of the cultural heritage of Afghanistan.

## MESAYNAK IN LOGAR

It is believed that two millenia ago, the city of MesAynak<sup>40</sup> was part of the flourishing kingdom of Gandhara, ruled by a Buddhist king. Large scale construction of monasteries and shrines at MesAynak began, according to Afghan scholars, as early as in the first century, when the site was ruled by the Kushans. The Afghan Institute of Archaeology has identified the remains of the Buddhist city as belonging to the Kushan period up to the late Shahi period (1<sup>st</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century CE). The site lay on the main trade route to India and the great wealth derived from its silver and copper mines and international trade on the Silk Road financed the wealthy decorations of the monastery.

The huge number of artifacts excavated from the site and displayed in a special hall of the National Museum shed light on the Buddhist art of the Kabul region. Unfortunately the Chinese mining company MCC has a contract to extract the world's largest copper reserves in large open-cast mines, which pose a greater and more imminent danger to the historical and religious treasures buried in these hills.

Archaeologists have discovered two large monastic centres, namely the Gol Hamid and Kafiriat Tepe. Within the centres are monk cells with domed ceilings and richly ornamented shrines in courtyards. Hundreds of painted clay statues of the Buddha, Boshisattvas and donors have been discovered. Painted representations of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas have also been found on the walls. According to the National Museum (*MesAynak- New Excavations in Afghanistan*), several clay images of the Buddha seated on a rectangular podium were discovered in the courtyard. There are stone reliefs portraying scenes from the Buddha's life. In one chapel were found a three-metre long Reclining Buddha and a seven-metre high Standing Buddha. From a second chapel was recovered a five-metre high Standing Buddha. A wooden sculpture of a seated Buddha has also been discovered here.

Today historians and archaeologists from the Afghan Institute of Archaeology and the Delegation Archeologique Francaise en Afghanistan (DAFA) are working to preserve, catalogue and scan three-dimensional images of hundreds of images of the Buddha and his worshippers, stupas, paintings, coins and ceramics which have already been found there.



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**TEPE-SARDAR IN GHAZNI**

It is believed that Buddhism was in a flourishing state in the province of Ghazni in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD when the Arab Islamic armies attacked Ghazni. One of the monastic centres was located at Tepe-Sardar here. It was also known as Tepe-yi- Nagara, according to the National Museum Notice at Kabul. The monastery was located on a hill east of the Ghazni river. The Buddhist complex consisted of stupas, chapels and monk cells and was richly decorated. According to the museum notice, although Buddhism had spread in the Ghazni area since the time of Asoka (in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC) this particular complex whose main stupa was the largest in Afghanistan was built in 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD and thrived for nearly six centuries until after the arrival of the Arabs.

The large Buddha head dated from 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century AD from Tepe-Sardar, Ghazni displayed in the museum upper hall shows that it must have adorned a life size image of the Buddha in Dhyana Mudra. It is made of clay. The eyes closed in meditation, thin, long, curved brows and a high nose appear to be finely chiselled. Small volutes adorn the head. And the hairline is sharply drawn. The sophistication of an artist's hand stands out in the modelling and painting of the image. Another image of grey-blue schist dated to 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century AD is headless. The Buddha from Tepe-Sardar sits in meditation. The throne or the pedestal depicts monks and disciples holding out a large tray of lotus flowers at Buddha's feet.

Interestingly the complex also hosted a Hindu Shaivite shrine where an image of Durga Mahisasurmardini was found during excavations. The restored head of the goddess can be seen at the museum upper hall. The bust of Mother Goddess Durga is awe-inspiring. The size of the original image can be guessed from the huge head of the goddess preserved in a glass case. The image is an evidence that female divinities were worshipped in Afghanistan.

A gigantic Reclining Buddha measuring over 15 metres was found in chapel 63 of the Tepe-Sardar monastic complex. Unfortunately it was completely destroyed in recent times, says the museum notice.

**BUDDHA'S ALMS BOWL FROM KANDAHAR**

The massive black marble alms bowl of the Buddha was found in 1925 at the shrine of Mirwais Baba in the city of Kandahar. It is known as the 'Buddha's Begging Bowl' because of the lotus flowers carved on its

underside. Two Persian inscriptions in Arabic script were etched on it later. The inner inscription, dated 1490, lists rules and regulations of the Kandahar madrassa (religious school). The Archaeological Survey of India has procured impressions of the six-line Persian inscriptions on the Buddha's Begging Bowl, the *Bhiksha Patra*, claimed to have been used by the Buddha at Vaishali.

Dr Phani Kant Misra, Regional Director, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Kolkata, along with Dr. G.S. Khwaja, Director-Incharge Epigraphy (Arabic and Persian), ASI, Nagpur, had gone to Kabul to inspect the bowl. Dr. Misra revealed that the bowl came quite close to the Begging Bowl of the Buddha. This was supported not only by circumstantial evidence but also matched well with the description given by the Chinese pilgrims in their memoirs. The bowl is believed to have been carried away by the Kushan ruler, Kanishka, to Peshawar and later to Kandahar in the 2nd century AD. The famous alms bowl today stands in the front gallery of the National Museum at Kabul.

#### ASOKAN EDICTS AT KANDAHAR

Two bilingual inscriptions written in Greek and Aramaic were found at Shar-i-kona near Kandahar. The important inscriptions found at Kandahar tell us about the personality of Asoka as a pioneer of peace and non-violence. The two texts were rendered into Asokan Prakrit by Dr. D.C. Sircar.<sup>41</sup>

According to noted historian Radhakumud Mukherji the Edict brings to light some new facts about Asoka. It confirms the literary evidence as to the extent of Asoka's empire extending beyond the natural boundaries of India upto the borders of Persia. The location of this Edict in Kandahar, 'furnishes the only epigraphic evidence, so far known to corroborate the literary evidence of Greek historical works as to India's North-Western frontiers', says Mukherji.<sup>42</sup> The Kandahar Edict also dates Asoka's religious propagation from "the 10<sup>th</sup> year after his coronation i.e. after 260 B.C.", says Mukherji. The Edict also describes the result of Asoka's propagation of the Dhamma. 'The people have been rendered more moral and all living beings have had now their good and happiness increased through spread of Non-Violence'.<sup>43</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The above mentioned antiquities are among the hundreds of the Buddhist objects displayed at the National Museum at Kabul. The museum was once the proud custodian of about 1,00,000 (one lac) pre-Islamic and ethnographic objects, a large number of which were lost or destroyed. Fortunately many looted or stolen objects are coming back to the museum. The United Kingdom has helped in the return of a large number of artifacts. Objects are also being added to the museum from new exploration sites at Balkh, Bamiyan and MesAynak.

Meanwhile the world is looking up to Afghanistan for the recovery of the world's largest Reclining Buddha image that Xuanzang saw at Bamiyan. The famous Afghan archaeologist Prof. Zemaryalai Tarzi is currently at work in Bamiyan searching for this Buddha. The glory and grandeur of one of the biggest custodians of Buddhist art in the world is hopefully returning!

*This article is based on material from: Hiebert, Fredrik and Cambon Pierre, (Editor), Afghanistan Crossroads of the Ancient World; interviews with Dr Fahim Rahimi and Dr. Omarakhan Massoudi, present and former Director General of the National Museum of Afghanistan at Kabul and Dr. Nicolos Engel, Vice-president of the DAFA; author's own travels in Afghanistan and visit to the National Museum and sources given below:*



AUTHOR AT THE BUDDHIST CAVES OF BAMMIAN (PHOTO BY SUNITA DWIVEDI)



THE MONASTIC SITE OF TOP-E-RUSTAM (PHOTO BY SUNITA DWIVEDI)



STUPA OF GULDARA (COURTESY NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFGHANISTAN, KABUL)



**BUDDHA FROM TEPE SARDAR, GHAZNI (COURTESY NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFGHANISTAN, KABUL)**



**MAITREYA FROM KUNDUZ (COURTESY NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFGHANISTAN, KABUL)**



**'MIRACLE OF SRAVASTI' FROM MONASTIC SITE OF KHAM-I-ZARGAR  
(COURTESY NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFGHANISTAN, KABUL)**

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# THE DETERMINANTS OF AFGHANISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

MIRWAIS BALKHI

## ABSTRACT

*The design, setting up and run of a successful foreign policy requires an understanding of internal and external factors which determine it. Many Asian states have focused on their foreign policy determinants after the important events in their recent histories, and then defined a new approach to the new potential and capacities in their relations with regional and international players. With the establishment of a new government in Afghanistan after September 11, 2001 the country entered into a unique stage in its foreign policy as a result of interactions with international players. In this period, the decision makers had to respond to traditional determinants in Afghanistan. Therefore, this paper seeks to identify the main determinants and factors influencing foreign policy in a descriptive analysis based on primary resources.*

*Key Words: Afghanistan, National Interests, Foreign Policy Determinants, Migration, Common Memory.*

## INTRODUCTION

Basically, today no country or government can survive without any link with the international environment and global community. Thus, the presence of any country in the international system is defined systematically on the basis of the principles and objectives of foreign relations, which inevitably require interactions with other states in the global system. Foreign policy in such circumstances shows the importance of a well-defined objective; that is the philosophy of the state. This means, a state without foreign policy directions is in an uncertainty like a ship without radar sailing across the ocean in an ambitious direction. The nation-states, therefore, have defined their known relations with other nations of the

world into a purposeful interaction based on the logical and realistic approach. Though idealist cosmopolitans claim to enrich co-existence, the foreign policy philosophy follows a realist approach.

Afghanistan being the inevitable part of the Greater Ariana civilization and the main inheritor of the then Khorasan, has a long historical memory of foreign relations with the nations of the world. But in modern history, especially after the Great Game of the 19th century for buffer zones, Afghanistan could not play a role in decision-making and foreign relations. The Socialist, Mujahideen and Taliban regimes in 1980s and 90s also remained inactive in the field of foreign relations. The same tradition continued in the beginning of the third millennium, especially, until the major event of September 2001 and the fall of the Taliban government. The event of 11 September 2001 is a turning point in the history of international relations that transformed human society into post and pre - 11 September history.<sup>1</sup>

Today when Afghanistan has entered a new and important era of its foreign relations with the regional and international actors breaking decades of isolation (1980s-90s), there is a dynamic and pro-active foreign policy in the country conducted strategically by the foreign policy makers and Afghanistan's institution of diplomacy that is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this period, the Afghan foreign policy makers formulated the policy on the basis of the determinants of foreign policy. This article attempts to analyse the written literature of policy makers, analysts, intellectuals, political elites and academics to define the determinants of Afghanistan's foreign policy.

### THE DETERMINANTS OF FOREIGN POLICY

A country's foreign policy is the total overview of principles, interests and goals which a government through the establishment of all-round relations with other countries, is seeking support for these values. In other words, governments seek to maintain the objectives of decision-makers in foreign relations and ideals of foreign policy of the country. It is also said that foreign policy seeks to influence and change the behavior of other countries. Therefore, the determination and formulation of foreign policy is conducted by a series of interactions of multiple factors, such as institutions, processes and people.

Foreign policy of a country is the continuation of domestic policy. Also the state foreign policy is dependent on the international environment

and system. As much as the internal factors of a country affect decision making in the foreign policy arena, similarly, rules and regulations in the international scenario also influence the foreign policy. Simply put, foreign policy of a country is formulated taking into account both the internal and external factors. The relationship between domestic and international determinants is a topic widely discussed in the field of international relations and foreign policy analysis (FPA). Some researchers believe that domestic policy and foreign policy are two separate issues and to be discussed as two independent arenas. But others believe that these two issues are inter-related. To be clearer, foreign policy and domestic policy are inter-dependent. Most often, foreign policy is called the intersection point of politics which seeks consent for the internal and external policies of a state in order to achieve its interests in the global system. The determinants of the foreign policy of Afghanistan include: Historical Common Memory, Geographical Location, National Interest, International Environment and Migration.

#### DOMESTIC DETERMINANTS OF AFGHANISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

Each country has different internal determinants and factors in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy which plays a fundamental role.<sup>2</sup> These factors may not be the same in other countries. Afghanistan's political literature (internal or external) have shows that the country's historical memory, geographical position and national interests are important determinants for foreign policy principles. Foreign policy decision makers of Afghanistan have been influenced by these factors, intentionally and unintentionally. This section explains the reasons for choosing these factors.

##### **1. Common Historical Memory**

Principles and objectives of the foreign policy of a country are overshadowed by the historical memory of its people.<sup>3</sup> This historical memory sometimes has also been the collective memory, rooted in the realities of their historical, social, religious, humanitarian and cultural aspects. The interactions of Afghans throughout their long history resulted in the formation of a collective memory which drew the concept of nationhood. The simplicity and complexity of the historical memory of a country depends on its old historical and ethno-religious pluralism. As much as history goes back to ancient times, as much are the ups and

downs of the common memory of the nation. The Common memory of Afghans has also witnessed this phenomenon.

Afghanistan is cast out of the greater Ariana civilization inhabited by large nationalities having long and deep ancient history where big nationalities lived. The past roots have led different people from surrounding areas to gradually enter Great Ariana with their own traditions, cultures, memories, religions and human nature, they being the people from different regions. The challenge was doubled especially in Afghanistan by the time the Ariana land was fragmented into ethnic and religious groups where people and communities got separated from each other. In the current situation, each nationality and religious sect are proud of their glorious cultural-religious past. They feel racial, cultural and religious commonalities with their counterparts outside Afghanistan. The racial, cultural and religious factors in Afghanistan are separate units of a collective memory which presents a common value and memory for the people of the country.

### ***1.1. Ethnic Factor***

In Afghanistan, since ancient and medieval period, there lived various ethnic groups. The Aryans and non-Aryans (pre-Aryan indigenous peoples) are two ethnic groups that are simply distinct from each other. In the course of time the Aryan race which defines the major roots of ethnicities in the country was gradually broken down to small minor ethnic groups. Today the ethnic groups of Tajiks (Persians), Pashtuns, Hazaras and Uzbeks are different from each other and have a separate common memory of their own. Their independent memory goes deep into the medieval and modern history, as today each of them is called as an independent ethnic group.

Afghan and non-Afghan historians have produced a mass of literature about the Aryan origin of the Tajiks and Pashtuns. But the Aryan origin of the Uzbeks and Hazaras is a little ambiguous, and the Afghan historians have produced less literature about it. However, the scholars in Japan and Turkey have proved with many historical, linguistic and anthropological facts that Hazaras and Uzbeks are also of the Aryan origin. To enroot Hazaras into Arian origin, they are traced to the Sakas, Turks and Mughals who are supposed to be having Aryan roots. The Turks, the bigger branch of Uzbeks, Kazakhs, and Turkmens are also recorded as being one branch of the Aryan race.

While looking at the historical roots and origins of various ethnic

groups in Afghanistan, one needs to look at the common memory of the country in its recent past. In the post-German and post-French definition of the nation we define it as a group of people who live within a geographical boundary, having a common memory, having common interests, and keen to live together in future. This definition can explain the concept of nationhood in Afghanistan where all ethnic groups are citizens of the country.

### ***1.2. Cultural Factor***

There have been various cultures in Afghanistan since long history. Each ethnicity has a culture with a separate identity. However, in the larger culture as noted earlier, cultural roots of the people of Afghanistan have been the same with different details, forming distinct cultures. Though the absence of a major national culture is still felt in Afghanistan, a common behavior can be seen in the details of micro behavior in each corner of Afghanistan. A micro behavior of a group of people in major cities is not an ethnic behavior, but a changed mindset of the group of people who have adopted new culture based on the interactions of Afghans with the rest of the world.

Minor cultures of ethnic groups in different parts of Afghanistan have also amalgamated into the mainstreams. The minority Pashtuns of northern Afghanistan behave like the majority Tajiks. The same applies in the South. The minority Tajiks of southern Afghanistan behave like the majority Pashtuns. The Uzbeks and Hazaras of Afghanistan also affect or get affected by the cultures and behavior of the people who live with them. What is needed to be understood, in Afghanistan it is the low development of people which brings out a political tradition against the developed citizens in major cities. This defines two political traditions in the country.

### ***1.3. Religious Factor***

In contrast to a number of countries in the world, Afghanistan's religious pluralism and diversity is limited. Islam as the main religion of the country is divided in Sunni and Shiite religious sects. Although in religious terms, a minority of Hindus and Islamic-sect Ismailis also live in Afghanistan, they have least influence in political interactions. But, they are concerned about diversity in the country. In today's world, minority is an important element and instrument of foreign policy. In terms of political identity, for example, the Hindu minority of Afghanistan is important for India. Or

Ismaili minority in terms of its larger community inhabiting Afghanistan's neighbourhood has an economic importance. Prince Karim Aga Khan is more concerned about the life, conditions and rights of the Ismaili minority in Afghanistan.

Afghan Islamic sects, Sunnis and Shias being Muslim with common religious and historical principles are close to each other. In other words, unlike many neighboring countries and the Arab world, religious gap is not large in Afghanistan that may lead to religious clashes unless used as a tool for exploitation by some external force. The Sunnis of Afghanistan as a major sect are influenced by Murji'ah theology and Hanafi School of jurisprudence as both respect Ali and the family of Prophet Mohammad. The Sunnis of Afghanistan oppose the radical Salafi thought which disregards Shias as Muslim. The Sunni religious admirers (*Maddah*) have always praised Ali in a mythological method than other Caliphs in Islam. The guardians of the Ali shrine in Balkh, northern Afghanistan are also Sunnis and not Shia.<sup>4</sup>

The Shias of Afghanistan are theologically pro-Alawi; a group of Shia which traces their roots and memory from the original followers of Ali in the first Islamic century and have more commonalities with the Sunnis. They are less influenced by the Safavi Shia who are more ideological and anti-Sunni. The Shias of Afghanistan do not insult the three earliest Caliphs of Prophet Mohammad who succeeded him one by one, which is a common practice among many Safavi Shias. In the same way, they do not insult any wives and companions of the Prophet. These are common ideological traits among the Shias of Iran, Pakistan and the Arabs.

With this approach, the majority people of Afghanistan enjoy common race, ethnicity, culture, beliefs which come under a single umbrella. Therefore, the earliest definition of the concept of nation as a group of people who live within a boundary, having common memory, with mutual economic interests and want to live together in the future, can be applied to Afghans.

## **2. Geographical Location**

Countries that are geographically located at the crossroads of the world are naturally in the forefront of the international affairs. However, the important location may be used by regional or extra-regional powers. Many such countries may not have a role in shaping their foreign policy. For example, the Europeans played with the destiny of peoples of Asia in the

18th and 19th centuries. They used many of these nations to secure their own interests.

Afghanistan's location is the most important element of its foreign policy goals due to its geopolitical situation, geo-strategic location, geo-economic location, and geo-cultural situation. Due to its status of four-way intersection among the Asian countries (South, East, West and Central Asia), Afghanistan was awarded the title "Heart of Asia".

### ***2.1. Geo-political Location***

Its geopolitical position has always played the most important role in the fate of Afghanistan<sup>5</sup> in designing its foreign policy. The geopolitical variable of Afghanistan always obliged the policy makers to take this factor into serious consideration.

### ***2.2. Geo-strategic Location***

The geo-strategic location of Afghanistan is recognized and well known. Therefore, Afghanistan as a strategic geographical entity cannot disengage itself from global developments and competition. The interests of big powers in Afghanistan and the region do not allow a free breathing for the country to play in an open environment.<sup>6</sup> This factor is rated as an essential tool in determining the country's foreign policy by the decision makers.

### ***2.3. Geo-economic Location***

Resources and communication are the two factors involved in determining the importance of geography. This is where a country like Afghanistan can strengthen its position as a crossroad to different surrounding regions. Different countries around Afghanistan are interested in taking advantage of its geo-economic location as a transit route to import and export energy and other materials. Import and export through Afghanistan as a transit route can shorten the road to their business goals and economic interests. Afghanistan's economic resources are another important factor of geo-economic importance in the region and the world which enhances Afghanistan's value.

### ***2.4. Geo-cultural Location***

Afghanistan has been a melting pot of cultures since ancient times. This has led to the current situation as a point of intersection, which has given it a unique geo-cultural position. The majority of Afghans are not biased

and extremist. This is enrooted in their cultural interactions through history. In its foreign policy, almost all major cultures- Mongolian, Iranian, Indian, Chinese, Buddhist and many others not only exist in Afghanistan but also in a way have seeped into it. While the interconnected world is seeking alternative ways in their quest for human development, Afghanistan as a melting pot is interacting as peace loving nation, if there is no outside intervention. For example, separatism, ethnic divide and religious conflicts are characteristics of Afghanistan's neighbours, while as there is no such sign in Afghanistan. The unity of ethnic and religious groups, despite the long war is followed by the people on the basis of their cultural interactions.

### **3. National Interest**

The foreign policy of a country consists of self-interest strategies. A state has to protect its national interests and achieve this objective in international relations. In response to issues of national interest such as basic economic, political, cultural and social needs, the philosophy of the state comes out.<sup>7</sup> According to Morgenthau who defined national interest, it focuses on "what is good" and "what is necessary". Finally, a last question to be answered is "what's possible".

Post-Taliban Afghanistan's foreign policy is faced with an unusual growing national interest literature. Unusual because in the history of Afghanistan's foreign relations, especially since the middle ages till the Taliban regime, the element called national interests was missing in relations with the outside world. It was all the desire and individual interests of the influential elites, who would shape the foreign policy of Afghanistan in a way they wanted. These influential individuals would focus on their own survival.

At present, the magazines and local Afghan newspapers are full of analyses and literature on the foreign policy of the country. Besides, the Afghans working in think tanks and other platforms are observing the principles and behavior of Afghanistan's foreign policy. However, a major challenge in Afghanistan is the underdevelopment of the concept of national interest. There are no comments or views on vital and non-vital national interests or in other words, constant national interests and inconstant national interests. A number of Afghan leaders and political elites believe that Afghanistan is a country of different ethnicities and the nation is not yet formed. Therefore, national interests need to be identified and defined in the first place.



The concept of national interests is visible and definable in the contemporary foreign policy of Afghanistan where different ethnicities have consensus on various elements and factors of national interest. There may be no common agreement on the classification of the levels of national interests which is almost the same in each and every nation except in the most authoritarian ones. Some of the influential political elite may be accepted as hero in a part of Afghanistan while as he may not be welcome in other part of the country. As a consequence it takes time to get consent from the people on the levels of national interests. In general, there are elements of national interests in Afghanistan like many states surrounding it. We try to differentiate the levels of the national interests of Afghanistan's foreign policy:

### ***3.1. Vital National Interest***

Vital National Interest is a set of principles and values of a state which legitimizes the philosophy of the existence and diplomatic apparatus in a country cannot have debate on it. The vital national interest of Afghanistan, includes, Afghanistan's sovereignty and independence, internal and external sovereignty, territorial integrity, national identity, national security, protection of major and minor ethnic groups, supporting multi-religious groups and languages. All these elements justify both realism and idealism which reflects both subjectivity and objectivity.

### ***3.2. Important National Interest***

Important national interest is a set of values which the diplomatic apparatus of a state tries to protect and develop. The important national interests include social justice, public-political participation, balanced development, civil rights, etc. These elements need detailed definition and analysis.

### ***3.3. Marginal National Interest***

Marginal national interest is a set of values which is the focus of a diplomat in the negotiations and foreign policy.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the elements of marginal foreign policy are not agreed to by all sections of the country. For example, there are many issues in Afghanistan which are not related to vital or important national interests. If it is denied or neglected, it does not affect the higher level interests of the nation. The ideological values are one clear example. There are parties and political groups which take their idealistic position and sometimes refuse to deal with the same.

## EXTERNAL DETERMINANTS OF AFGHANISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

Like the domestic or internal determinants, external factors also affect the shaping of foreign policy. However, the external factors of foreign policy are different in each country. The tradition of Afghanistan's foreign relations suggests that the country has been more affected by external factors than the internal ones. According to a major hypothesis, Afghanistan is one of the few countries whose domestic policy is affected by its foreign policy. In other words, the domestic policy of Afghanistan is the continuation of its foreign policy.<sup>9</sup>

### *International Environment*

There are many international events, systems and interactions which affect the policy formulation of the states and nations. Many a times, the foreign policy of a country is the outcome of the international environment. In the anarchic scenario of the international system as mentioned by realists, the states do not trust each other which results in an uncertain policy behavior of a state against the other. A pessimistic umbrella prevails in the sub-system which threatens nations against nations. Therefore, international events have decisive role in the formulation of foreign policy goals. For example, in the period between the two world wars (1919-1939), the rise of fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany and also militarism in Japan resulted in a harsh French foreign policy to defend France. The United States of America changed its foreign policy towards the former Soviet Union visualizing threat from the rise of Hitler in Germany. For example, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in China in 1931 was a threat to the interests of the United States of America and the Soviet Union in the Far East, which led to end of the hostility between the two great powers.

The location of Afghanistan at the margins of four regions respectively- South, West, East and Central Asia has led the foreign policy makers of the country to strike balance and define regional cooperation as one of the most important principle of the foreign policy of Afghanistan. This has given an opportunity to Afghanistan to have the privilege of being a transit hub. Therefore, intra-regionalism is a leading determinant in the foreign policy of Afghanistan.

### *Migration*

Migration is seen as a tool of foreign policy today. According to Michael

Teitelbaum both the receiving and sending countries of the migrants are defining migration as important foreign policy driver. Since Afghanistan sends most emigrants to the neighbors, the region and the world, this element is one of the factors in the foreign policy of the country.<sup>10</sup>

Afghanistan has two kinds of emigrants in the international environment. First, a group of citizens who have migrated to different countries as a result of imposed wars, poverty, unemployment and lack of resources. This group of refugees consists of different people including political activists and educated persons who can be used in espionage and related activities. On their return to Afghanistan, these Afghan migrants can pose challenge to the government of Afghanistan which does not have the capacity to accommodate them.

Second group is those citizens who migrate to the neighboring and other countries across the world in search of work. Majority of these workers are in Pakistan, Iran and the Arab World. They are expatriates and can help through their remittances to the country. Addressing their legal situation is one of the foreign policy priorities for Afghanistan.

#### CONCLUSION

The foreign policy and international relations literature of Afghanistan shows that despite serious changes and developments in the field of foreign policy decisions making, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes decisions on the basis of the aforementioned factors. In the current situation, almost all states in the international system are looking for a clear picture of the factors behind foreign policy decision making, but the same is not discovered yet in Afghanistan.

Therefore, foreign policy of Afghanistan has to take into consideration the following driving forces:

- a) Considering broader roots of the ethnicities, cultures and groups, common memory of Afghans has to be considered as the same and common, while formulating the strategic policy.
- b) The unique geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-cultural position of Afghanistan standing at the margins of the four regions: Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia and East Asia, gives an important position to the country especially as a transit hub, which in turn defines the national interests of the country.
- c) Afghanistan like any other nation has its own national interests,

which are of different levels. So while formulating the foreign policy principles, it is better to see these levels of interests in the common memory of Afghans.

- d) Internationally also the changing environment has direct impact on the foreign policy shaping of Afghanistan. One such important issue is that of the Afghan migrants, which poses both the challenges and opportunities for the country. This is an important determinant in the foreign policy of Afghanistan.

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# AFGHANISTAN-CENTRAL ASIA RELATIONS

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## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of Central Asia has been inextricably linked with that of Afghanistan through the millennia. There have been migrations between the two regions, movements of armies and of ideas and of establishment of communities across them. It is during the period of the so-called 'Great Game' in the mid-19th century that the current boundaries between Afghanistan and Central Asia were created by the British and the Russian Czars with the former serving as a buffer to avoid any possible military confrontation between their respective armies. With the advent of Stalinism in the 1920s, an Iron Curtain fell between the Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan resulting in complete isolation of the former from the latter which came more under British influence; accompanying this process was the rather tortuous delineation of the boundaries of the Central Asian states to create an artificial inter-ethnic demography which, concomitantly, created titular ethnic identities for these states after Turkmen, Uzbek, Tajik, Kyrgyz and Kazakh ethnic groups. Post-1945, the Soviet republics of Central Asia were showcased as modern and progressive societies, embodying the finest characteristics of their historical culture, and as models for the Islamic countries, outside of the Soviet orbit, which were presented, in this outlook, as decadent and unsuitable for the aspirations for progress of their populations.

The Soviet occupation and political reconstruction in Afghanistan was projected by the Soviet leadership as a continuation of this ideological march. The Afghan *mujahideen* were called 'Basmachis' to draw parallel with the Soviet operations against their opponents during the course of the establishment of their authority in Tajikistan. At the same time, the

Soviet soldiers of Central Asian origin were exposed to Islamic radical influences and some were quite receptive to them. The closing years of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan were also accompanied by the loosening authority of the Soviet centralised system and the beginning of opposition against the regional leaderships from groups which were earlier repressed; although many of these were, essentially, cultural nationalists, the influence of the *mujahideen* outlook on cultural and religious thinking of some of these groups was quite evident. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan on 15 February 1989, was followed by intra-*mujahideen* conflict and political instability in Afghanistan and a somewhat shaky process of political consolidation amongst the newly independent Central Asian countries, after dissolution of USSR in 1991, with their poorly controlled zigzag borders and the disruption of the closely integrated Soviet economy. In two of the newly independent Central Asian countries, namely, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, there was serious unrest and political instability. In the case of the latter, there was a violent civil war between May 1992, and June 1997, when nearly 100,000 Tajik nationals crossed the border into Afghanistan; the civil war was ended with the realisation between the contending sides, and their external backers, that the rise of the Taliban was a graver threat to the region which needed to be faced by sinking their own differences. The Central Asian countries, with the exception of Turkmenistan, were supportive of the efforts of the Northern Alliance against the Taliban; their ideological, fugitive opponents were receiving training from Al Qaeda and other radicals in Afghanistan and Pakistan's tribal regions and attending the radically-oriented seminaries/*madrassas* there. They also allowed the Northern Alliance leaders to stay in the country of their respective ethnic affinity and, in the case of Tajikistan, even a certain number of Tajik refugees. Both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan also allowed for organisation of logistical support to the Northern Alliance military operations against the Taliban but the Taliban could not target any of them militarily.

#### CENTRAL ASIAN ROLE DURING 'OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM'

Soon after the launch of 'Operation Enduring Freedom' (OEF) to dislodge the Taliban, on 7 October 2001, the US realised that reliance on Pakistan for mounting the operation would not be sufficient; thereafter, the support of all the Central Asian countries was sought. The major role in this operation was played by Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan but both

Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan played not insignificant role in supporting the allied effort since its beginning. Apart from overflight permissions by all of them, with Turkmenistan permitting only humanitarian overflights, air bases were allowed by Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Insertion of special operations troops, in supporting role to the Northern Alliance forces, took place *via* Tajikistan. All Central Asian states provided major support for the creation of infrastructure for the Allies for the removal of the Taliban and, subsequently, for mounting military and air operations to enforce security for the Karzai government. The terrorist groups from the Central Asian countries fought along with the Taliban and Al Qaeda elements against the Northern Alliance soldiers who received the support of US air force through precision bombing of the Taliban frontlines. A large number of the Central Asian terrorists were killed in these operations but many of them escaped, along with the Taliban and the Al Qaeda, to Pakistan's tribal region after the fall of Mazar-e-Sharif on 9 November 2001. They got the opportunity to regroup and retrain to fight another day against the Central Asian governments just like the Taliban's own hopes *vis-a-vis* the new Afghan regime. The northern supply route, a web of surface transport routes spanning Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Russia, for ISAF troops became critical during their withdrawal phase in view of the complicated relationship between US and Pakistan. It needs to be added, however, that US officials thought that cost of troops' withdrawal along this route could be five times higher than on the Pakistan route. It is quite evident that the Central Asian countries have a vital stake in the current political order and stability in Afghanistan and that they are prepared to support military operations to achieve that. Still, they are chary of deploying troops or directly supplying military hardware to any government in Afghanistan.

#### STATE OF CURRENT AFGHANISTAN-CENTRAL ASIAN RELATIONS

The current state of relations between Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries has to be viewed in the broader international context of the fluid situation in Afghanistan and in the Af-Pak region and the withdrawal of US and other international troops. The interest of the major powers, such as US, European countries, Russia, China and India as well as of the neighbouring countries, such as the Central Asian countries, Iran and Pakistan, in developments in Afghanistan is high; for the neighbouring countries, the additional concern is the internal ethnic balance of power

in respect of those ethnic groups with which, respectively, they have affinity. US, Russia, China and India are also worried about the resurgence of Islamic terrorism and drug trafficking; even otherwise, the presence of the big powers in and around Afghanistan is also watched warily by each of them in the global balance of power context which adds its own complications to the international diplomacy concerning any Afghan settlement. US interest is to develop Central Asia's linkages with South Asia, through Afghanistan, in which other powers do not have comparable interest, to say the least. The Central Asian leaders have been trying to optimize their bargaining leverages between the US and Russia over the facilities offered by them for domestic - largely economic - considerations. The suspicion in President Karzai's mind about the Russian and Central Asian intentions was manifest when he criticised a joint US-Russian operation in 2010 against drug laboratories by invoking the memory of Soviet military invasion. Presently, the US-bolstered political stability suits all countries, except Pakistan which feels that the Taliban and the kindred elements based on its territory should have a dominant representation in the government in Kabul. There is, nevertheless, a wider anxiety, Pakistan being an exception again, that a power vacuum in Kabul in the short-to-medium term would have negative impact in the neighbouring regions and this anxiety forms the backdrop to the diplomatic manoeuvres and policy measures of Afghanistan's neighbours.

The Central Asian states are, therefore, following somewhat episodic – and, even, nebulous – process of negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan and US governments. They are equally participating in the broader discussions under different diplomatic tracks for Afghanistan's future settlement; they are also involved in some initiatives of their own which are, apparently, aimed at increasing their comfort level with the political leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan but to little practical effect, however.

### *Tajikistan*

Tajikistan shares a roughly 1,300 km. long border most of which is in rugged terrain and is not properly protected. The porous border between the two countries is a major concern for both governments as well as the international community. The border is a major route for drugs being smuggled from Afghanistan to Russia and Europe and drug and insurgent-related violence along the border has been increasing. Martha Brill Olcott, in her paper in the Carnegie Endowment's volume on *Regional Approaches*



to *Afghanistan* (2010), even hazards the opinion that the influence of narco-traffickers has created conditions for a possible state capture. The transportation links between the two countries, such as Afghanistan-Tajikistan bridge, are being rebuilt with the help and financing from foreign donors. One major area of cooperation is energy; both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are trying to develop their potentially vast hydroelectric resource by selling it to Afghanistan and, eventually, to South Asia. Both governments, that is, Afghanistan and Tajikistan have also agreed to construct a 1,000 MW of hydroelectric plant on the Pyanj river; its construction is being funded by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank. Tajikistan participates in quadripartite talks involving Russia, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Being part of the northern supply route, it has offered use of its airfield and France makes limited use of the commercial Dushanbe airport.

### *Uzbekistan*

The Uzbek-Afghan relations, in their current phase, can be dated back to the opening of the Uzbek embassy in Kabul in August 2002 and the subsequent meetings at the leadership and the official levels. Uzbekistan has promised assistance in the reconstruction of the Afghan economy in areas such as water resources, energy and construction. On 16 December 2002, it re-opened a major north-south transport artery - the Hairatan bridge on the Oxus river- which had remained closed during the Taliban period. There have been discussions regarding the construction of Dugoron-Herat-Termez railroad between Uzbekistan, Iran and Afghanistan. Uzbekistan is also involved in the construction of 10 bridges in Afghanistan. The main exports from Uzbekistan are energy, refined oil, ferrous metal, road transport equipment, furniture, food and others in exchange for fruits and its by-products. The direct trade between them is not very consequential but Uzbekistan provides the infrastructure for access to the north and for facilitating closer economic integration of the adjacent regions. As regards the peace process in Afghanistan, President Karimov of Uzbekistan tried, unsuccessfully, to float, at the NATO Bucharest Summit (2008), a Contact Group '6+3' involving the participation of the immediate neighbouring countries of Afghanistan plus Russia, the US and NATO thereby offering a venue to all the "factions" [*sic*] in Afghanistan to come together without favouring anyone; it is a modified revival of the contact group, '6+2' on Afghanistan under UN auspices dating back to 1999 and which provided a forum for talks with

Taliban until their discontinuation after '9/11' attacks. It also offered air field facilities to US, off and on, and to Germany.

### *Turkmenistan*

Turkmenistan has followed a policy of strict neutrality in its international relations. Nevertheless, it has maintained a fairly active relationship with Afghanistan irrespective of the regime in power; it even maintained diplomatic relations with the pariah Taliban regime. The Turkmen constitute about 3% of the total population of Afghanistan, or approximately 1 million people, who are located along the northern border with Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; the family relations between the two communities do not appear to be close but the Turkmen government has maintained relations with tribal elders in that area, especially Ismail Khan who is Tajik by ethnicity. It was also able to, relatively speaking, insulate itself from the turmoil in Afghanistan. Despite its relations with the Taliban, the Turkmen government was supportive of the US-led invasion and allowed transit of humanitarian material and emergency landing. It also provided a supply route for the coalition forces in Afghanistan. At the UNGA's 65th Session in 2010, the President, Berdimuhammedov, advanced, unsuccessfully, a proposal to hold an international high-level meeting on confidence-building in Afghanistan and development of efficient institutions of state power, under UN auspices; he offered to do this in consultation with the Afghans, UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, other specialised UN structure involved in the Afghan issue and all interested parties. Drug-trafficking from Afghanistan also takes place via Turkmenistan, according to some, with supportive elements within the Turkmen government, and Herat has emerged as a major narco-trafficking hub. It supplies Afghanistan's electricity needs at a discount. In 2011, Turkmenistan agreed to build a 150-km extension to a railway line to connect the eastern part of Turkmenistan to Andkhoy border town in Faryab province of Afghanistan. The Presidents of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan signed a memorandum of understanding for the construction of a rail line to connect Akina-Andkhoy (Afghanistan), Atmurat-Ymamnazar (Turkmenistan) and Pyanj (Tajikistan); a 75 km line from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan is already operational and, with this link, the northern parts of Afghanistan would improve their connectivity with its northern neighbours. Another imperative for the Turkmen leadership is to export its large natural gas and oil resources to the rest of the world. Here, a major project is the TAPI

pipeline, with the participation of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, to bring natural gas from the Dauletabad gas field in central Turkmenistan along a highway to Herat in eastern Afghanistan and further to Helmand and Kandahar in southern Afghanistan, to Quetta and Multan in Pakistan, terminating in Fazilka in northern India. The pipeline would be 1,680 km long (of which 735 kms. are in Afghanistan), and is estimated to bring an annual revenue of over \$200 million to Afghanistan, along with the right for the country to use 500 billion cubic meters of natural gas for its own consumption. Its cost is expected to be US \$ 7.6 billion, according its main sponsor, the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

### *Kyrgyzstan*

Although participating in various multilateral mechanisms, the internal lack of cohesion in Kyrgyzstan due to the continuing turmoil since its independence acts as a major barrier in playing any important bilateral role as far as Afghanistan is concerned. It offers to US a basing facility at Manas near the capital, Bishkek; however, it keeps changing the terms of its use to improve the financial compensation from the Americans and for better bargaining with the Russians over their base at Kant, also about 20 kms east of the capital. According to reports, the Kyrgyz government has approved a deal which will allow NATO forces to transport cargo by rail and road to and from Afghanistan. Drug-smuggling remains a major problem with powerful traffickers becoming well entrenched in southern part of the country located in the explosive Ferghana valley. It is also facing a problem of Islamic militancy . It also aims to be a source of hydroelectric power for Afghanistan and, eventually, South Asia; this is an old idea, surfacing off and on since the independence of the country in 1991, but its prospects are still far from being realistic.

### *Kazakhstan*

Kazakhstan formed part of the international coalition against the Taliban regime which was overthrown by military action. It has also been participating in various international conferences for Afghan settlement. Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister offered a concept of "Broader Central Asia" that envisions Afghanistan's active economic cooperation with the Central Asian countries. As stated by Kazakh government, Kazakhstan favours a comprehensive and continued international effort, led by the United Nations, to bring peace, economic recovery and humanitarian relief to

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Afghanistan. Illegal drug production and trafficking in Afghanistan have been described officially as major international concerns, particularly for Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan also provides small financial assistance to Afghanistan.

#### MULTILATERAL INTERACTION

*CAREC.* A major framework for multilateral cooperation involving Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries, coordinated by the Asian Development Bank, is the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation [CAREC] which is a practical, projects-based and resource-oriented partnership that promotes and facilitates regional cooperation in transport, trade and energy. CAREC comprises Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This programme has completed 10 years in 2010 completing more than 100 projects worth over \$ 15 billion; the programme is now in its second decade. A major ADB programme, under this, is the 'CASA-1000'; after three rounds of deliberations, a Memorandum was signed by the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in November 2007 to formulate this energy trading project. A Secretariat for Interstate Council on Central-Asian and South-Asian regional electricity market development was established to oversee the project. The 'CASA-1000' project also aims to transmit energy from the Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan through longest electricity transmission line. There is, however, no sign of trans-national management of the Oxus River basin due to national sensitivities; and, Uzbekistan opposes 'CASA-100'.

*SCO.* One of the frameworks for multilateral collaboration is the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation [SCO] comprising China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan and which has an elaborate Central Asia orientation for engagement; Afghanistan is one of the observer countries. Its cooperation on security is aimed at countering terrorism, separatism and extremism; it has also set up a Regional Anti-terrorism Structure. However, it has been unable to develop any effective institutional position on Afghanistan despite the subject being a perennial one in its deliberations.

*CSTO.* Yet another form of engagement is the Central Asia Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), comprising Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which has a mechanism for joint

military training as well as military intervention to meet possible threats against the security of the member countries. To the extent that the Central Asian countries can be helped to meet the threat of terrorism originating from the side of Afghanistan, this organisation can have a role to play. The issue, of course, is the effectiveness of the CSTO machinery in meeting these challenges; the other one is the sensitivities of the Central Asian states, as well as China, about US coordinating ISAF activities with Russia within Afghanistan and those affecting Central Asia.

*ECO.* There is also a multilateral framework in the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) which involves these countries including Afghanistan. This organisation does not have any security dimension to meet the possible threats which its members might face. As a mechanism for economic cooperation amongst the member-countries, its effectiveness is yet to be established.

#### DIPLOMATIC & DEFENCE/SECURITY DIMENSIONS

In addition to the above, the Central Asian countries have, within the framework of bilateral relations with Afghanistan, security cooperation as one of its aspects. It may be stated that several of the Central Asian ambassadors have had intelligence background.

The most important dimension is the presence of elements hostile to the Central Asian countries which are reaching out across the border and even inspiring other home-based groups. The old malcontents and new radical elements from their own respective countries have found safe havens and the opportunity to train in terrorist activities in Pakistan. These developments are quite evident in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. According to *Jane's Intelligence Review* (January 2012), the Central Asian countries are preparing for renewed security problems post-US withdrawal. Following the 'Operation Enduring Freedom', various Central Asian militant groups, along with the Al Qaeda and the Taliban elements, escaped to Pakistan's tribal areas. Amongst the existing groups is the *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan* (active in north-eastern Afghanistan, Tajikistan and southern Kyrgyzstan), its splinter groups called *Islamic Jihad Union*, revived *United Tajik Opposition* (UTO), a new group called *Jama'at Ansarullah* (active in Tajikistan), *Zhayshul Mahdi* (active in Kyrgyzstan), another new group called *Islamic Movement of Kyrgyzstan* trained in Af-Pak area, *Jund al-Khalifah* based in Af-Pak area (active in Kazakhstan), *Lashkare Tvaiba Kazakhstan* (possibly named after the Pakistani group

*Lashkar-e-Tayyiba*) and some odd Kazakh Salafi elements.

After the withdrawal of US and allied forces from Afghanistan, the engagement between Afghanistan and Central Asian countries is expected to intensify because of growing anxieties about the capabilities of indigenous Afghan security forces. The security dimensions of this interaction, essentially, relate to border security, collaboration between the drug control agencies within the bilateral framework as well as that of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), sharing of intelligence amongst the agencies of Afghanistan and Central Asian countries, but also possibly that of Pakistan, regarding movement of terrorist groups. It also opens up the possibility of cooperation in related areas such as capacity-building, training *et cetera*.

Given the Central Asians' own limitations, it can be assumed that the CSTO's role may increase *vis-à-vis* Afghanistan, thereby, enhancing Russia's regional influence which potentially poses problems for countries such as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Since July 2010, Russia has been pressurising the Tajik government to allow its border guards to help monitor the Tajik-Afghan frontier as they did until 2005. Russia has succeeded in getting the lease of Russia's 201st Division in Tajikistan renewed for another 49 years. Russia is also strengthening its base in Kant in Kyrgyzstan and is in talks about establishing another base in the south of the country.

Individual attempts to improve military capabilities may also be expected to increase. Already, Uzbekistan is asking, according to media reports, the US to leave its heavy military hardware behind which would also have regional implications due to its own complex relations with its neighbours.

Yet another possibility, in terms of the diplomatic and defence/security dimensions, is of these countries collaborating with their ethnically-linked community leaders in Afghanistan if the situation begins to get volatile; in that case, there could be direct military, material and intelligence collaboration of the respective governments with these leaders as was the situation prior to the US-led attack on the Taliban regime in 2001.

### **Post-2014 Relations**

The complexity in the Afghanistan-Central Asia relations is rooted in the fact that both regions have shown uneven progress towards their respective processes of political consolidation which have been impacted by developments/forces outside of their territorial limits. Besides, the

integration of the Central Asian economic space has not taken place and their respective growth trajectories have diverged quite sharply post-independence with the attendant problems in their relations with Afghanistan. The post-2014 situation in Afghanistan has significant implications for the relations of these countries with Afghanistan; the adverse external stimuli adding complications in this relationship could include any Western military action against Iran due to tensions over the latter's nuclear programme and/or, even worse, significant political instability in Pakistan since the Af-Pak area has emerged as the fulcrum on which regional political stability turns. The relationship could get more complex if there is a political meltdown in Afghanistan due to its domestic difficulties arising from the uncertainty after the presidential elections in 2014 as well as the failure to have a clear-cut agreement on political settlement in Afghanistan. In that scenario, there could be aggressiveness on the part, particularly, of the Haqqani Group in North Waziristan where most of the Central Asian terrorist groups have been based. The leaderships in Central Asia, that is, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan will also be having their own respective leadership transitions and it needs to be kept in mind that the Kyrgyz government has not yet fully consolidated its power. In that situation, the relationship between all governments involved could, in fact, move to specific Afghanistan-based – or expatriate – ethnic groups as was the situation in 2001.

The mitigating factors are that the security forces of the Afghan government are better trained and equipped; American special forces, about 10,000, are staying behind and US and NATO resources would continue to be provided to Afghanistan. Also, despite the controversy about the US drone attacks in the Af-Pak region, these have been quite effective in applying pressure on the Taliban.

#### **BROADER PERSPECTIVE & CRYSTAL GAZING**

As US leaders and officials are thinking about ways of achieving a smooth, stable transition in Afghanistan, the question to ponder over is as to whether Afghanistan is fated to be locked into this ever-perpetuating – and, alarmingly, ever-widening-cycle of political breakdown, external intervention followed by yet another breakdown as seems to be its history of last half century.

Since this tragic cycle derives its traction from the Af-Pak region – spawning instability, terrorism and fanaticism within the region and

beyond, recalling a different leaf from its own history puts the ongoing tragedy in an even more stark light. In the late 1920s, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's satyagraha movement, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan founded the *Khudai Khidmatgar* movement. Entirely non-violent and having strong democratic grass-roots units functioning in the hoary *loya-jirga* tradition, it caught national attention for its peaceful, non-violent agitation during the critical phases of the Indian freedom movement in the face of the repressive fury of the Raj machinery. The political influence of the *Khudai Khidmatgars* was such that, at the time of Partition, in what can be an example of the self-determination principle being put on its head, Gaffar Khan asked his followers not to participate in the referendum allowing others to vote in favour of Pakistan.

The essential point is that the grassroots political mobilisation is the best counter to the fragmented and violent politics which is prevalent in crucial parts of Afghanistan and the Af-Pak region. A democratically organised political force, which is non-violent, inclusive and empowering of its grassroots membership, is the only way in which long-term stability can be provided in Afghanistan and the Af-Pak region.

There are ways of doing that, including, political reforms which will ensure such kind of social and political stability as an effective answer against radicals of whatever variety. The Pushtoons, like the other traditional societies, have strong democratic tradition of grassroots governance by consent which, through external intervention, has been suppressed and distorted repeatedly as witnessed in the tragic recent history of Afghanistan. The Soviet occupation and the US military action have meant, as is only natural, the top-down imposition of their own respective political models. This tradition, despite these experiences, surfaces again and again even in the current phase of its history. The source of this turmoil in Afghanistan, as described above, needs to be removed so that the future generations of Afghanistan, and people elsewhere in the region and beyond, are spared the on-going bloodbath in Afghanistan today which can, possibly, worsen.



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# AFGHAN-PAK TRANSIT TRADE AGREEMENT *MAPPING IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA*

NAWAL K. PASWAN

## I. INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan is located in Southern/Central Asia and landlocked<sup>1</sup> among Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and China. Pakistan shares 2,430 kilometers border with the mountainous and landlocked Afghanistan in the west. Both countries share historical linkages stretching as far back into history at least since the invasion of the region by Alexander the Great around 326 BC. The relics of the ancient Gandhara civilization in both countries are indeed a living testimony to their shared past. The northern parts of Pakistan are inhabited mainly by Pashtun tribes which also constitute an ethnic group in Afghanistan and people of both countries are predominantly Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

The efforts of landlocked countries at the preliminary conference of Geneva in 1958 and the first sea conference in 1958 led to the adoption of articles 2, 3, and 4 of the High Sea Convention on the right of transit.<sup>3</sup> Adoption of the eight principles during the UNCTAD conference in 1964, and finally, the conclusion and coming into force of the 1965 convention on transit trade of landlocked countries, legally opened a new horizon for the economic relations of countries with sea coast and their transit neighbours. The number of landlocked countries increased to more than thirty nations in less than a decade, faced with a common problem of not having an outlet to the sea and transit problems.

Approximately one-fifth of the world's countries are landlocked and have no access to the oceans.<sup>4</sup> These countries are divided into seven clusters, Afghanistan being in the Central Asian cluster along with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. A

country can be at a highly disadvantageous position due to its being landlocked. The bordering states can impose conditions and restrictions on their imports and exports and weaken it politically and economically. For creating fair and equitable transit rights and obligations, the United Nations Convention on Transit Trade was adopted on July 8, 1965 to which Pakistan is a signatory. Keeping in view the 1965 convention, both Pakistan and Afghanistan signed an agreement on transit trade<sup>5</sup> known as the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA) in 1965.<sup>6</sup>

ATTA came into force on 2nd March 1965, essentially as bilateral arrangement between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Government of the (then) Kingdom of Afghanistan. In fact, Pakistan granted transit facility to Afghanistan in line with its commitment to the UN Convention on law of Sea (1958)<sup>7</sup> which makes special provisions for granting landlocked countries access to international seas. The stated objectives of the ATTA centered on improving the movement of goods through two countries on a mutually advantageous basis. The contracting parties granted to each other, as per the terms of the Agreement, freedom of transit to and from their territories. The ATTA identified two transit routes, (i) Peshawar-Torkhum and vice versa and (ii) Chaman-Spin Baldak and vice versa.<sup>8</sup> Given its landlocked situation, Afghanistan was destined to be the primary beneficiary of the agreement. Pakistan on the other hand, did not enjoy at that time good relations with the former USSR and, therefore, had only dim prospects of capitalizing upon the transit facility through Afghanistan offered by ATTA.

With the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the characteristically narrow Afghan economy was simply in tatters. The situation was compounded by a rapid deterioration of the law and order situation in Afghanistan while Pakistan's frontline role in the concluding phase of the Cold War further antagonized the USSR and only diminished its prospects, if any, of benefiting from the transit facility to meaningfully enhance its trade with the former USSR. The chaos that has prevailed in Afghanistan since then and the attendant rise in informal trade, particularly drug trafficking on the back of a phenomenal rise in poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, has had serious repercussions for Pakistan. As much as one-third of the Afghanistan's GDP still comes from growing illicit drugs, including hashish and opium and approximately 3.3 million Afghans are reported to be involved in the opium production and business.<sup>9</sup> While internationally Pakistan has been criticized for its inability to control the drug traffic emerging from Afghanistan, the virtually uninterrupted

growth of illicit trade hurts Pakistan's trade as well as industry. As per the reliable estimates, illegal trade between two countries crossed the US \$ 1 billion mark in the year 2008.

India has been seeking transit facility through Pakistan to Afghanistan and beyond since long. The emergence of newly independent Central Asian Republics (CARs) in 1991 coupled with a rapid growth of the Indian economy has actually intensified the Indian desire to get land access to the energy rich CARs. The relatively cheap imports of oil and gas from CARs are likely to boost the competitiveness of the Indian goods vis-a-vis its regional competitors including Pakistan. The huge construction market in Afghanistan, on the other hand, offers immediate opportunities to India for enhancing its share in goods and services exports in the region.<sup>10</sup> Pakistan has consistently been averse to the idea of granting transit facility to India through land. India, for its part, has been vying for the transit facility through different channels, lately, through the US which has considerable presence in the region. In fact the move to revise the ATTA has been reportedly prompted by the US.

The primary objective of this research study is to assess the current status, challenges and implications of Afghan-Pak Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) at the bilateral and regional levels. It also examines the practical perspectives of APTTA with a view to understand how Afghanistan will improve the access to overseas market through Pakistan's ports as Pakistan obtains better access to the Central Asian market and plays an important role in regional economic cooperation. Therefore, this paper is organized under following six sections including introduction which provides the stage of signing Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA) in 1965. Secondly, it examines the factors of transition from ATTA (1965) to APTTA (2010) and its necessity. Third section is devoted to examine the pattern of global, inter-regional and regional exports of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan over two decades from 1990 to 2010. Fourth section discusses the implication of providing or extending access of APTTA to India. Fifth section is devoted to examine the significance of APTTA to Afghanistan. Finally last section draws some conclusions for policy implications.

The methodology used in this research study comprises of a combination of analytical and empirical research methods. This research is based on the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include agreements, government documents and reports etc. The secondary sources comprise books, journals, newspapers, internet sources

and online information of various agencies related to the transit (bilateral and regional) trade. An attempt has been made to extract data from various ministries of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Comparable latest data has also been collected from the various International institutions or organizations i.e., Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook (IMF), Handbook of International Statistics Yearbook (UN), Key indicators of Developing and Asia Pacific Countries (ADB), Ministry of Commerce (Pakistan), Ministry of Commerce (Afghanistan), World Investment Report (World Bank), Asian Development Bank Report (ADB), and UNDP Report and others.

## 2. TRANSITION FROM ATTA (1965) TO APTTA (2010)

The Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA) was signed in 1965<sup>11</sup> with the objective of granting and guarantee to both parties the freedom of transit to and from their territories. The routes that were identified included: (a) Karachi – Peshawar – Torkhum, and (b) Karachi – Chaman - Spin Baldak from Karachi Port. The provision to include additional routes was also incorporated in the agreement. After establishment of Port Qasim it was included in 1988.<sup>12</sup> Custom protocol attached with the agreement outlined the procedures for transit through Wagah land route - presumably in anticipation that if and when Wagah route is included, the procedures may already be in place.<sup>13</sup>

It was also envisaged that no customs duties, taxes, dues, or charges of any kind whether national, provincial or municipal shall be levied on traffic in transit except charges for transportation or those commensurate with the administrative expenses entailed by traffic in transit or with the cost of services rendered.<sup>14</sup> The railway freight, port and other dues would not be less favorable than those imposed by either Party on goods owned by its own nationals. Parties have the right to adopt any measures necessary to protect public morals, human, animal or plant life or health and for the security of its own territory.

In terms of transportation, Pakistan Railways was the only authorized carrier. Later on due to non-availability of railway wagons, the transportation was allowed through National Logistics Cell (NLC) trucks. However, currently 80 per cent of goods are transported by private trucks authorized by NLC. From maximum of 24 items at present only two items are in the negative list (cigarettes and auto parts). Pakistan is committed to UN conventions, which require member countries to facilitate transit trade of land-locked countries like Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has lately been demanding of Pakistan to re-evaluate the 47-year-old Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATT) due to the changing regional dynamics. For its part, Pakistan, too, has been keen on revisiting the transit agreement with Afghanistan due to number of factors which inter-alia include:

- a) First, Afghanistan has emerged, of late, as one of the key markets for Pakistani exports which have witnessed impressive growth over the decade starting from 2000-01 and the upward trend is likely to continue. During 2005 to 2010, Afghanistan constituted around 7.0 per cent of Pakistan's total exports while it was merely 1.4 per cent in 2000 (IMF/DOTS, 2011).
- b) Secondly, Pakistan has long been concerned with the rise in informal trade due to rampant misuse of the transit agreement by unscrupulous elements on both sides. The illicit trade/smuggling is hurting Pakistan's trade and industry in various ways. The government itself has annually incurred millions of dollars of revenue losses due to the unregistered transactions which are made possible largely due to the otherwise remediable deficiencies inherent in the prevailing transit agreement.
- c) Thirdly, and connected to the second one, the informal trade has created a large entrenched network of intermediaries which have come to strongly embed the rather prolific drug traffic emerging from Afghanistan. This particular aspect of the whole thing has had global implications. Pakistan has been hard pressed to contain that traffic.
- d) Fourthly, as noted above, in view of the long-term interest of the international community exhibited as it is by huge investments and aid being injected into the country, Afghanistan is likely to become even more important as a promising export market for Pakistan.
- e) Finally, given Pakistan's frontline role in the global War against Terror, it is in the interest of all having a stake in the region that both Afghanistan and Pakistan build up strong economic partnership. There is a growing body of literature which suggests that formalizing and regulating the Pak-Afghan transit trade hold the key to promoting regional economic integration. A fairer transit dispensation between the two countries is likely to open up fresh vistas of opportunity for the impoverished and marginalized

people in the region and would, therefore, help substantially reduce the risk of their becoming an easy prey for the extremist forces.

The need for entering into a new Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement, 2010 (APTTA, 2010) arose as the 1965 agreement did not facilitate containerized cargo and did not address the issues related to pilferage and smuggling of goods.<sup>15</sup> The original agreement did not foresee the impact that advanced technology might have on transit trade and as a result new routes on Pakistan – Afghanistan border could be opened up. The agreement also needed revision after the emergence of Central Asian Republics so that Pakistan could secure its rights to use Afghanistan transit facilities for trade with Central Asia and provide transit facilities to landlocked Central Asian Republics. Both sides also wanted to take into account the updated customs procedures, improve the dispute resolution mechanism, address movement of psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals misused in the manufacture of narcotics and identify specific routes for the movement of transit goods through road transportation. At present 80 per cent of the transit goods are transported through road traffic.

Implementation of APTTA has improved access to overseas markets through Pakistan's ports. As a result, Afghanistan enhanced the proportion of their exports by more than 35 per cent destined for India. There is no quantitative study which evaluates the socio-economic costs and benefits of APTTA at the government, firm and households level.<sup>16</sup> While the government is expected to gain transit-related fees, the firms on both sides are expected to find new markets for their goods and services across Asia. Similarly household sector will benefit on two accounts. The Pakistani workers in sectors having export potential for Central Asian countries are expected to see their wages increase in the long run (similarly for Afghanistan). Second, if less expensive imports from Central Asian countries find their way into Pakistan, this can increase the consumer surplus in the form of cheaper prices (similarly for Afghanistan).

APTTA was signed on 28 October 2010 between the two countries and subsequently ratified by the cabinet in its meeting on December 1, 2010. The Instruments of Ratification have been signed by the President of Pakistan. The Instruments of Ratification were exchanged between the two countries as per the article 54 of APTTA 2010. However, Pakistan has refused to accede to one of the key Afghan demand i.e., allowing

Indian exports to Afghanistan via Pakistani territory. Due to heightened tensions between Pakistan and India, it seems highly unlikely that Pakistan would be ready to grant transit facility to India.<sup>17</sup>

The Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), 2010 was signed on 28th October, 2010 and became operational on 12th June, 2011. Afghanistan has been an important trading partner of Pakistan. Table 1 presents the trade matrix of Pakistan-Afghanistan during the period between 2000-01 and 2015-16. The volume of bilateral trade between the two countries has increased from US\$ 169.5 million in 2000-01 to US\$ 1846 million in 2015-16 but recorded highest ever US\$ 2508.7 million in 2010-11 (see Table 1). Exports from Pakistan to Afghanistan increased from US\$ 140 million to US\$ 2,336.7 million during the same period. The overall picture of trade records fluctuating trends between Pakistan and Afghanistan during these periods.

TABLE 1: PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN TRADE (US \$ MILLION) : 2000-2016

<i>Year</i>	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>	<i>Trade Turnover</i>	<i>Trade Balance</i>
2000-01	140.0	29.5	169.5	110.5
2001-02	169.2	22.9	192.1	146.3
2002-03	315.7	34.8	350.5	280.9
2003-04	492.9	47.4	540.3	445.5
2004-05	747.7	38.9	786.6	708.8
2005-06	1063.4	47.5	1110.9	1015.9
2006-07	753.9	76.2	830.1	677.7
2007-08	1143.6	91.3	1234.9	1052.3
2008-09	1398.0	93.0	1491.0	1305.0
2009-10	1572.0	139.0	1711.0	1433.0
2010-11	2336.7	172.0	2508.7	2164.7
2011-12	2250.0	199.0	2449.0	2051.0
2012-13	2066.0	288.0	2354.0	1778.0
2013-14	1870.0	360.0	2230.0	1510.0
2014-15	1962.0	323.0	2285.0	1639.0
2015-16	1437.0	409.0	1846.0	1028.0

*Source:* Extracted from Various issues of Pakistan Economic Survey, Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

Ministry of Commerce of Pakistan is responsible for the policy formulation and smooth implementation of the Agreement but it does not maintain the details of revenue generation accrued due to Afghan transit trade. However, according to FBR, since the implementation of APTTA, diversion of illegal trade to regular channels has contributed an amount of Rs. 8.3 billion at the import stage to the national exchequer.<sup>18</sup> The Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) also shows similar trend as reported by PBS but percentage decline in export to Afghanistan is slightly more i.e. 39%, while percentage improvement in imports from Afghanistan is comparatively less, i.e. 38%. Although there is minor variation in percentage change, mainly due to the currency unit / conversion, however overall trend depicts that export to Afghanistan is declining while imports from Afghanistan have gained encouragement in the local market.

### **2.1. Salient Features of APTTA**

APTTA 2010 establishes a regulatory framework in which Afghan businesses will be able to export goods easily through Pakistan to India, China and beyond via air and seaports. Under the agreement, Afghanistan will also be able to import goods with fewer delays and expenses via Pakistan. Similarly, Pakistani businesses will be able to export goods with greater ease, with regards to customs and paperwork, via Afghanistan. Other key elements of the APTTA, which have been extracted and summarized from the full text of the agreement, include the following:

- a) Transit trade through Afghanistan and Pakistan must take place along pre-determined routes and only utilising specified ports and border crossings.
- b) Afghanistan and Pakistan are obligated to ensure that suitable infrastructure and personnel are available at border crossings.
- c) While each country remains responsible for licensing transport operators (e.g., trucking firms) registered in their territory, Afghanistan and Pakistan should seek to harmonise their standards and regulations in this area.
- d) Transport operators from Afghanistan and Pakistan which receive a "temporary admission document" will be able to transport goods through the other country's territory. That is, Afghan trucks may carry goods via Pakistan to India rather than having to re-load them onto Pakistani trucks at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border,



as had previously been the case.

- e) The Afghan government shall recognize Pakistani driver's licenses and vehicle registration documents, and vice versa. In addition, Pakistan and Afghanistan shall begin to harmonize the regulations and standards for inspecting and certifying trucks used in the transit trade.
- f) The Afghan and Pakistani governments shall expedite and simplify the process for awarding multiple-entry visas to truck drivers from one another's countries.
- g) With the exception of selected items, goods transiting through Afghanistan and Pakistan shall be stored in sealed containers which meet international specifications.
- h) Customs officials may inspect the contents of up to 5 per cent containers at the point of entry into Afghanistan or Pakistan and may not undertake additional inspections unless signs of regulatory violations are found.
- i) The Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Coordination Authority (APTTCA), which is established under the APTTA, is responsible for monitoring and facilitating the implementation of the agreement.

The Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), signed in October 2010, replaced a previous agreement between the two countries dating from 1965. The first APTTA was designed to guarantee the freedom of transit for both countries within one another's territories. That was particularly beneficial to Afghanistan. While Afghanistan is a landlocked country, the agreement enabled it to conduct maritime trade via Pakistan's seaports.

However, the initial transit trade agreement suffered from certain fundamental weaknesses. One of its major flaws was that it did not address the issue of smuggling prevention.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, when the first agreement was signed in 1965, several Central Asian Republics were still part of the Soviet Union and were not permitted to trade goods with Pakistan via Afghanistan. Once countries in the region had become independent, trade was initiated between Central Asia and Pakistan via Afghanistan.

In order to facilitate transit trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the terms of the 2010 APTTA simplify the regulations and reduce the cost of transit transportation in both countries. For instance, transit goods from either Pakistan or Afghanistan are not charged duties, taxes or any other

additional expenses. Since the modified agreement has been in place, both Afghanistan and Pakistan have been able to deliver transit goods more efficiently and at a lower cost.

## **2.2. Delayed Implementation of APTTA**

The concerns noted above resulted in a range of delays to the implementation of the APTTA. The agreement, heavily discussed in 2009, was signed by representatives of both countries in July 2010, just before the Kabul Conference. However, the Pakistani Federal Cabinet did not authorise Pakistan's participation in the agreement until early October 2010. The APTTA was formally ratified by both countries on 27 October 2010 in a ceremony in Kabul, according to *The Express Tribune*, a Pakistani newspaper. While it was intended to take effect on 12 February 2011, implementation of the agreement was initially delayed for four months due to a series of regulatory disputes. The dispute involved a range of issues, including the proportion of Afghan containers which would be inspected, how Afghanistan-bound containers would be sealed and how truck drivers' biometric data would be collected and maintained. However, the most contentious dispute revolved around the provision of customs guarantees for Afghanistan-bound goods in order to prevent smuggling.

The APTTA mandated that Afghan firms transporting items via Pakistan provide what the text of the agreement refers to as "customs security" but which are also referred to as customs or bank guarantees. In short, Afghan businesses importing goods via Pakistan would be obliged to provide a third party, such as a bank, with a sum of money equivalent to the Pakistani customs which would normally be levied on the goods. If the Pakistani customs officials found that the goods were dumped on Pakistani markets before entering Afghanistan, the Pakistani authorities would have the right to take possession of the customs guarantee. If smuggling did not occur and the transit trade goods arrived in Afghanistan, as intended, the funds would be returned to the importer (or kept in a standing account for the importer). Such a system of financial guarantees is established in Protocol 3, Section 1, Article 9 of the APTTA, though the Afghan and Pakistani governments understood the implementation of guarantees very differently. According to the *Asia Times*, Pakistan wished to ensure that Afghan importers, in particular, provided cash guarantees with reputed Pakistani banks in order to prevent them from engaging in smuggling. Afghan officials countered that doing so placed an unfair burden upon the Afghan business community, which

may not have sufficient resources to leave as guarantee. Questions were also raised about which institutions could hold the customs guarantees on behalf of Afghan businesses. Pakistan preferred that top-tier Pakistani or international banks hold the funds, while Afghanistan pushed for Afghan banks to hold the guarantees in trust. Disagreement over this issue led to delay in implementation of the APTTA from 12 February to 12 June 2011. During that time period, according to Pajhwok Afghan News, uncertainty over the status of the agreement led Pakistani border and customs officials, most notably in Karachi, to cease clearing goods being imported into Afghanistan via Pakistan. At any one time, several thousand Afghanistan-bound containers were held up in Pakistan. In March 2011, as many as 10,000 trucks, many filled with agricultural products for Afghanistan had been held up in Karachi and the shipment had begun to rot. A high-level delegation was dispatched to Pakistan in this instance – and several times later – in order to facilitate Afghan imports. Further challenges mounted. Pakistani and Afghan authorities compromised and agreed that Pakistani insurance companies, rather than banks, could hold customs guarantees for Afghan businesses, according to the *Daily Times*.

However, this compromise quickly encountered opposition from the insurance companies themselves. Based on the past rates of smuggling between the two countries, companies were unwilling to issue such “insurance guarantees”, according to the *Pakistani Business Recorder*. Moreover, regulatory disagreements and other technical challenges complicated the agreement. While the APTTA took effect formally in mid-2011, provisions pertaining to customs guarantees were suspended for 60 days from 07 July. A further 30-day delay was issued in early September 2011, as per *The Express Tribune*. Amidst these delays, transit trade continued between the two countries in a regulatory grey zone, with Pakistani customs officials regularly delaying clearance of Afghanistan bound goods.

While border infrastructure arrangements and other technological parts of the APTTA are still being refined and developed, the parts of the agreement pertaining to customs guarantees ultimately took effect in October 2011. Imports into Afghanistan were subject to customs guarantees, which had to be paid to selected Pakistani insurance companies (rather than banks). These had to be equivalent to 100% of the customs which would normally be charged if the goods were intended for Pakistani markets (rather than for delivery to Afghanistan).<sup>20</sup> Such a move was celebrated within Pakistan, though Afghanistan’s Minister of

TABLE 2. VOLUME OF TRANSIT CARGO (2005 TO 2010)

Collectorate	Containers						Total
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010*	
MCC Appraisalment	24462 (1781)	30452 (2346)	49203 (2652)	51262 (4820)	70899 (4049)	36507 (3331)	262785 (18979)
MCC Port Qasim	3568 (1465)	11436 (5147)	12272 (4732)	12102 (6448)	23483 (10165)	12617 (5973)	75478 (33950)
MCC PaCCS							
US Military only	(15728)	(18088)	(22180)	(27127)	(54387)	(29439)	(166949)
Total	28030 (18994)	41888 (25581)	61475 (29564)	63364 (38395)	94382 (68601)	49124 (49421)	338263 (219878)
Grand Total:	47024	67469	91039	101759	162983	87867	558141

*Note:* PaCCS denoted Pakistan Customs Computerized System, \* indicates up to June 2010 and figures in brackets indicate non-commercial cargo.

*Source:* International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Container Scam, Office of the Federal Tax Ombudsman, last accessed on 10 January 2012 from <http://mq.com.pk/docs/ISAFContainerScam.pdf>.

Finance told *The Express Tribune* that the requirement had pushed some Afghan businesses to increasingly rely upon Iranian rather than Pakistani ports. However, the extent to which Afghan imports and exports have moved from Pakistani ports to Iran's Bandar Abbas port remains unclear.

### **2.3. Afghan Transit Trade through Pakistan**

Under ATTA, the transit facilities were started in 1965. The events of September 11, 2001, however, led to a situation where other governments started to operate inside Afghanistan. ATTA obviously did not provide for the imports into Afghanistan of the United States and other ASAF governments like United Kingdom, Germany, France and Italy. Post-9/11 Pakistan was thus confronted with a situation where two distinct types of cargoes would be flowing through its territory:<sup>21</sup> ATTA-related Afghan cargo and non-commercial or military cargo of various governments operating in Afghanistan.

Due to the nature of military cargo and the fact that imports by governments have distinct rights and privileges over normal commercial consignment, it was crucial to evolve a fool proof mechanism where each type of transit to Afghanistan was correctly and distinctly identified and processed accordingly. Failure to correctly identify different consignments and / or absence of clear and effective regulations on importers, customs clearing agents, transporters, etc. could be a recipe for disaster, potentially opening huge opportunities for the unscrupulous elements within and outside the Customs Department.

Military or non-commercial supplies to Afghanistan were further divided into two distinct types based on the manner these were to be processed by the customs; (a) US Military Cargo and ISAF / NATO Cargo. During the period (2005 to June 2010) a total of 558,141 containers transited to Afghanistan. Of these 166,949 (30 per cent) containers belonged to the US Military, 52,929 (9 per cent) to ISAF/NATO and the remaining (61 per cent) were commercial ATT consignment (see Table 2).

Overall, Afghan transit imports have increased more than Afghan transit exports over the past decade. In 2001, total Afghan transit trade through Pakistan stood at a value of around US\$ 400 million. Afghan transit exports through Pakistan remained steady, having reached a high point of US\$ 80 million in 2006 and declined to US\$ 40 million in 2009, while Afghan transit imports through Pakistan increased from US\$ 366 million in 2005 to US\$ 1 billion in 2009.<sup>22</sup> In other words, the volume of Afghan transit imports has almost tripled within the past decade. Transit

TABLE 3: TRANSIT TRADE OF AFGHANISTAN THROUGH  
PAKISTAN (US\$ MILLION)

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Commercial</i>	<i>Non Commercial*</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Commercial Cargo (No. of Containers)</i>
2009-10	2157.0	1165.0	3322.0	75288
2010-11	1871.0	1165.0	3036.0	56203
2011-12	1256.0	525.0	1781.0	27924
2012-13	1320.0	565.0	1885.0	27401
2013-14	2029.0	689.0	2718.0	36274
2014-15	2550.0	na	2550.0	49507

\* Embassies, NGOS, UN, Government of Afghanistan.

Source: [www.fbr.gov.pk](http://www.fbr.gov.pk)

trade as presented in Table 3, although, declined by 46% during 2009 to 2012 but shown improvement since then and reached the level of US \$2550 million. However, overall it is 23% lower in contrast to 2009-10. Despite the decline in non-commercial transit trade, the curve of commercial transit trade seemed positive.

The percentage contribution of commercial transit trade in total has improved from 65% in 2009-10 to 75% in 2013-14, whereas noncommercial contribution has declined from 35% to 25%. The latest data (for the year 2014-15) equates the total transit trade figure as commercial transit trade data, whereas data for non-commercial transit trade is not reflected by the source. This table also presents the movement of containers in transit trade from 2009-10 to 2014-15.

TABLE 4: TRANSIT TRADE WITH AFGHANISTAN, 2011

<i>Country</i>	<i>Trade (US\$ Bn.)</i>	<i>Volume (%)</i>
Pakistan	2.10	34.00
Uzbekistan	1.99	32.00
Iran	1.50	25.00
Turkmenistan	0.57	9.00
Total :	6.16	100.00

Source: Report on International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Container Scam, Office of the Federal Tax Ombudsman, 10 January 2012.

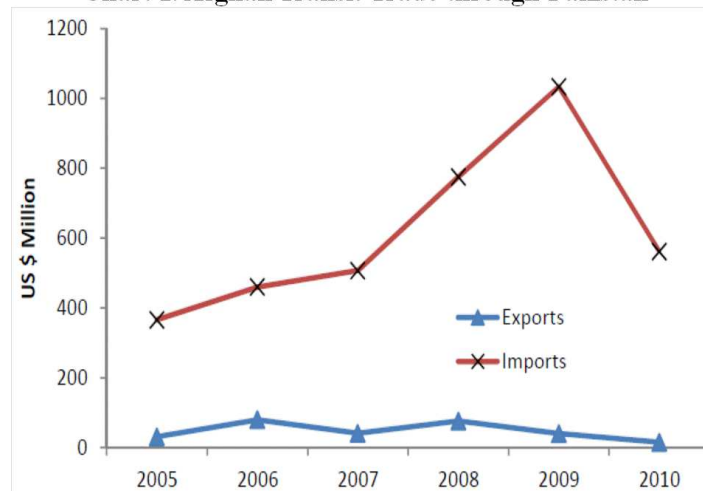
According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), in 2012 at least half of Afghanistan's exports went either to Pakistan or via Pakistan to

other destinations.<sup>23</sup> In 2011 as presented in Table 4, Afghanistan received nearly 34 per cent of all its imports via Pakistan.<sup>24</sup> The considerable increase in Afghan transit trade flows via Pakistan enhances the opportunity to smuggle opiates and acetic anhydride concealed within large trade flows. The following sections identify how the conditions and the specific trade routes of APTTA could be misused for the purposes of illicit trafficking.

Afghan Transit Trade is a source of revenue for Pakistan in the shape of port charges for handling the transit goods. Similarly, revenue is being earned by Pakistan Railways, National Logistics Cell (NLC) and private sector transporters by transporting the transit goods through Pakistan. Furthermore, Gwadar port has also been included as an entry point for transit goods along with Karachi and Port Qasim. This will generate further economic activities. Under the new Agreement, Afghanistan has offered 17 transit routes to Pakistan to export goods to Central Asian Republics (CARs).<sup>25</sup>

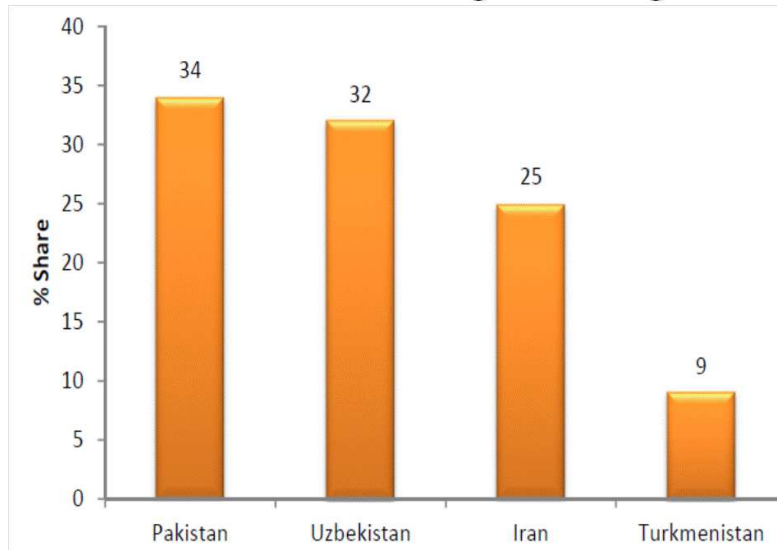
The Afghan transit trade through Pakistan has been on the increase. Exports from Afghanistan are through Wagah, Karachi Port and Port Qasim. The Wagah land route for Afghanistan exports to India was included in 1980 and is operational since then. Afghanistan's Imports only come through Karachi - Port Qasim. Chart 1 shows that by 2009, Afghan transit exports through Pakistan stood at \$40 million. The highest level in the recent past was in 2006 at \$80 million. The transit imports through Pakistan increased from \$366 million in 2005 to \$ 1 billion in 2009. This increase is largely attributable to the rising rebuilding costs in Afghanistan.

**Chart 1. Afghan Transit Trade through Pakistan**



Pakistan's trade balance with Afghanistan has been on a perpetual

**Chart 2. Share of Countries Allowing Transit to Afghanistan**



**Figure 1. Afg-Pak Transit Trade Routes**



rise since the start of this decade. Pakistan being the 6th largest population in the world provides Afghanistan with a ready market for harnessing its comparative advantage. For Pakistan, the reconstruction opportunities in Afghanistan provide immense potential for industrial and construction



activities. Pakistan's export of services to Afghanistan has also been on the increase.

It is evident from the Chart 2 that Pakistan's share is just over one-third of the total Afghan transit trade. Uzbekistan and Iran closely compete for their share in transit trade with Afghanistan. According to a recent estimate,<sup>26</sup> goods worth over US\$ 6.16 billion were transited into Afghanistan during 2009-2010. Pakistan is not the only country through which imports and exports of Afghanistan are transiting. Afghanistan also has transit agreements with Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The share of these countries in terms of the transit load provided to Afghanistan is given in Chart 2. Pakistan leads the list with 34 per cent followed by Uzbekistan and Iran.

In the absence of any legal cover in the 1965 Agreement, Pakistani exporters was paying 110 per cent of the value of the goods as security to Afghan Government for transit to Central Asia irrespective of the ownership of transporting vehicles.<sup>27</sup> It takes more than a year to get the security released from the Afghan authorities through a non transparent mechanism. The exporters from Pakistan have to file registration with multiple Ministries and Agencies of Afghanistan.

In view of the above, an Afghanistan – Pakistan Transit Trade Coordination Authority will be co-chaired by Secretary Commerce and Deputy Minister for Commerce of Afghanistan and include representatives from relevant government Ministries and Chambers of Commerce. This Authority will monitor effective implementation of the agreement, formulate and monitor measures to curb smuggling and resolve disputes regarding the interpretation or the implementation of the Agreement.

Under the new agreement (APTTA, 2010) the rights have been secured on permanent basis with legal cover for the following entry and exit points for Pakistan's exports: (a) Torkham to Hairatan (with Uzbekistan); (b) Torkham to Torghundi (with Uzbekistan); (c) Torkham to Ai Khanum (with Tajikistan); (d) Torkham to Sher Khan Bandar (with Tajikistan); (e) Torkham to Aqina (with Turkmenistan); (f) Torkham to Torghundi (with Turkmenistan); (g) Chaman to Islam Qala (with Iran); and (j) Chaman to Zaranji (with Iran).<sup>28</sup>

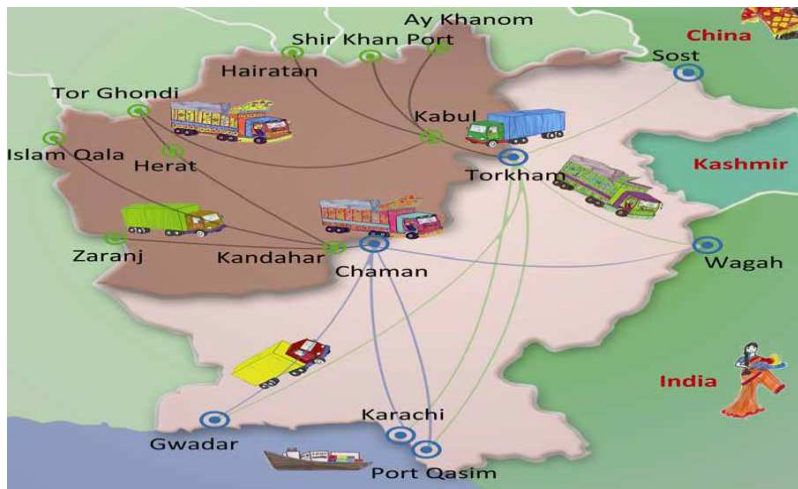
Afghan trucks will be allowed access to sea ports carrying Afghan cargo for exports. Only those trucks which are carrying Afghan cargo or exports beyond Pakistan would be allowed to lift Afghanistan imports which transit through sea ports. Only Afghan trucks having valid permits duly cleared by biometric security systems will be allowed entry.<sup>29</sup>

Afghanistan is allowed to use Pakistani trucks for transit of their imports from Pakistani ports to Afghanistan. Empty Afghan trucks would not be allowed entry to lift Afghan imports from sea ports. Afghan trucks will be allowed to travel up to sea ports and Wagah land border station on designated routes only (see Figure 1). The law enforcement agencies would ensure their monitoring and security through modern tracking methods. If Pakistan had not allowed this concession to Afghanistan, Pakistani trucks would not have been allowed a similar concession to carry exports to Central Asia through Afghanistan.

#### 2.4. Afghan-Pak Transit Trade Routes

The text of the agreement authorized a number of routes by which Afghan goods could transit via Pakistan en route to India or other international markets. These routes begin and end at the following ports and border crossings (see Figure 2): Peshawar-Torkham, Chaman-Spin Boldak, Ghulam Khan, Sost-Tashkurgan, Port Qasim, Karachi and Gwadar port. It is important to note that the APTTA concerns only trade through Afghanistan and Pakistan but not trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which is governed by separate trade, border and customs regulations and agreements.

FIGURE 2: APTTA - GETTING AFGHAN GOODS TO GLOBAL MARKETS



Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industries (2012), APTTA, Afghanistan

Pakistan has long enjoyed a better market share in the Afghan market vis-a-vis India. In fact Pakistan has been, for quite some time, Afghanistan's largest trade partner (Figure 2). Over the past decade Pakistan's exports

TABLE 5: AVERAGE DWELL TIME FOR EACH PHASE IN ATT

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Days taken</i>	
		<i>Chaman</i>	<i>Amangarh</i>
P1. Arrival to IGM	Shipping line/clearing agents/port authorities	1	1
P2. IGM to MCH	Afghan traders/clearing agents/port authorities	4	4
P3. IGM to "out of charge"	Customs/clearing agents/port authorities	4	4
P4. "out of charge" to "out of gate"	NLC/ clearing agents	5	5
P5. "out of gate" until arrival at dry ports	NLC/ clearing agents	9	6
Time taken to Torkham from Amangarh (as per recent estimate obtained from C/As)	Afghan truckers/clearing agents		2
Total Days:		23	22

Source: USAID (2010), Pakistan Trade Project: Dwell Time Study, Deloitte Consulting, LLP.

to Afghanistan have registered an impressive growth of 31 per cent. Pakistan's global exports in 2008-09 registered a 13 per cent decline over the preceding year primarily due to the slack in global demand in the wake of the global financial crisis and domestic power outages. The data for exports to Afghanistan for the year 2008-09 tell a similar story showing decline of -0.5 per cent after registering a positive export growth over the past 7-8 years. India has always been vying with Pakistan to gain better access in the Afghan market.

With the toppling of Taliban in 2001 and the concomitant invasion of Afghanistan by the Coalition Forces, amongst other things, the pattern of Afghan trade has been shifting. Notably Indian exports to Afghanistan have grown steadily in terms of value. On the whole it is mainly through Iran that Indian goods are transited to the landlocked Afghanistan. But increasingly India has been lobbying with the Coalition Partners, notably the US, to get a transit route through Pakistan to Afghanistan. This may well have been one of the factors behind the revision of ATTA which has reportedly been strongly supported by US.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.5. Afghan Transit Trade Process and Cost

To estimate and clarify the delays, a systematic analysis of the Afghan Transit Trade (ATT) process from the vessel arrival to border crossings into Afghanistan can be broken down into five phases.<sup>31</sup>

1. Vessel arrival to the issuance of the import general manifest (IGM) date;
2. IGM to Machine Number (MCH) date;
3. MCH to clearance date and "out of charge" issues (goods released);
4. "out of charge" to "out of gate"; and
5. "out of gate" to arrival at final destination.

The Table 5 indicates average days for each phase:

There are a number of costs associated with the ATT process (see Table 6). The table shows authorized payments to relevant entities as well as "unauthorized" payments or "speed money" as they are generally referred which are paid to expedite the process. The authorized payments vary between PKR 260,000 (US\$ 3,059) and PKR 340,000 (US\$ 4,000) for each consignment depending on the size of the container. The chart does not list a payment of PKR 200,000 (US\$ 2,353) for the security of the containers, as it is a refundable cost on the safe return of the container. The "un-receipted" payments are usually around PKR 30,000 (US\$ 353)

per container, but this can depend on the whims of whoever demands payment. Information about these amounts has been obtained from C/As and truckers. Payees include custom staff at post, transporters, security and/ or police authorized en route, or political authorities in the Khyber Agency only.

TABLE 6: ATTC CONSIGNMENTS CONSIDERED FOR DWELL TIME STUDY

	<i>Chaman Dry Port</i>	<i>Amangarh Dry Port</i>	<i>Peshawar Dry Port</i>	<i>Total</i>
30 days or less	7969	2127	536	10632
>30-40 days	595	479	91	1165
>40-50 days	267	337	51	655
>50-60 days	162	134	9	305
>60 days	312	503	64	879
Total:	9305	3580	751	13636

Source: USAID (2010), Pakistan Trade Project : Dwell Time Study, Deloitte Consulting, LLP.

The total dwell time for consignment to travel to the border posts of Tokham and Chaman was 22 days and 23 days respectively. This was the situation when the data from the PRAL system was analysed, which was for the period March 2009 to April 2010. The situation has deteriorated since then, to the extent that the dwell time has now extended to around 40 days. This is directly attributed to waiting for vehicles (phase 4) to be booked and arrival for loading at the Karachi Port. After customs release of the goods, the agents book transport through the NLC. While the PRAL system data indicated that, the time spent waiting for transport was, on average, 5 days, that time has increased to between 10 and 30 days. The wait for transport is a major bottleneck in the process and is the most pressing issue that needs to be resolved if idle time at Karachi port is to be reduced.

### ***2.5.1. Afghan Transit Trade Procedure for Relief and Diplomatic Goods***

Afghanistan Transit clearance procedures for humanitarian Relief Goods is allowed by both Road & Rail Movement through NLC Bonded Carriage by Road and Pakistan Railways by rail but diplomatic goods like US Embassy / US Aid / US Army can be moved on market vehicles. Before preparing the shipping documents following points have to be considered and should be inserted in all the shipping documents for Afghan Transit Procedure for Humanitarian Relief Goods & Diplomatic Cargoes for Embassies.

- All Packages and Documents must be marked goods in transit to Afghanistan via Karachi, Pakistan.
- B/L must show name / address of Afghan consignee.
- In notifying party name / address of Our Agents Name, Karachi can be shown.
- Transit Permission / Route Permit Required from CBR Islamabad for NGO's etc and undertaking from Local Corporate Office/ Embassy/Consulate for Diplomatic Goods.
- Tax Exemption Certificate Required from "Ministry of Finance" Kabul / Afghanistan for all relief and diplomatic goods.
- Amendments not allowed by Pakistan Customs. Therefore, Karachi ship agent must file all correct particulars in Afghan Transit Manifest.

Clearance time at Karachi Sea Port is minimum two/three days and maximum three / four days. While transportation time upto delivery at Pak-Afghan Border is minimum two/three days and maximum three/ four days. After necessary Custom Transit Formalities at Pak-Afghan Border goods are physically examined / checked at Afghanistan Custom Check Posts for relief goods only and it will be transported to destination in Afghanistan and delivery will be arranged at Consignee's Door. Pakistan Customs Check Post at Torkham is normally operative from 8.00AM to 4.00PM, but if need be the timing is extended till 4.30 PM. Pak-Afghan border on normal working days/under normal circumstances remains open for cargo movement up to 5.00 PM and closes latest by.

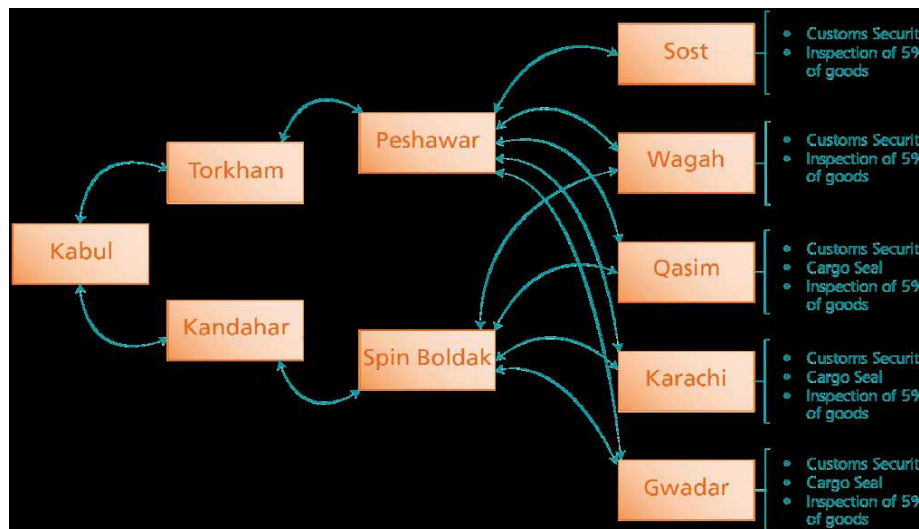
Transit Clearance Time at Pak-Afghan Border is minimum one day. Custom Check Post in Afghanistan is based at Jalalabad for destination to Kabul and another Custom Check Post at Spin Boldak for destination at Kandhar. On reaching Kabul, the truck/trailer drivers immediately report at Kabul Custom House. Kabul Custom House is located on the main road leading towards Kabul city and is about four/five miles before reaching the city of Kabul. At Kabul Custom House, the cargo is finally inspected by Kabul Customs in the light of the shipping documents and the route permit "Rah-Dari" is issued by the Afghan Customs at Torkham. If everything is found in order the cargo is allowed to be moved out from Kabul Custom House for onward delivery at the consignee's yard within the city limits of Kabul. Transportation Time upto Delivery at Consignee Door's from Torkham Border to Kabul is minimum one day and Chanman border to Kandhar is minimum two days.

**2.5.2. Afghan Transit Trade Clearance Procedures for Commercial Imports in Afghanistan**

Afghanistan Transit Trade for Commercial Cargo is allowed both by Rail through Pakistan Railways and road by National Logistics Cell (NLC). Before preparing the shipping documents following points have to be considered & should be inserted in all the shipping documents for Afghan Transit Trade (ATT) & Goods in Transit to Afghanistan (GITA) Procedure for Commercial Import.

- All Packages and Documents must be marked goods GOODS IN TRANSIT TO AFGHANISTAN VIA KARACHI / PAKISTAN.
- B/L must show name / address of Afghan consignee.
- In notifying party name / address of Afghan Party in Pakistan can be shown.
- “Jawaznama (Afghan Import Permit)” Required from Consignee issued by Govt. of Afghanistan.
- Amendments not allowed by Pakistan Customs. Therefore, Karachi ship agent must file all correct particulars in Afghan Transit Manifest.

FIGURE 3: SYSTEM OF CUSTOMS CHECKS



Source: Afghan Opiate Trade Project (2012), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Clearance Time at Karachi Sea Port is minimum three / four days and maximum four / five days. After transit custom clearance demand of Railway Boggies & Trucks will be sent to Pakistan Railways Station Master

TABLE 7: NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR THE TRANSIT

<i>Documents</i>	<i>Copies</i>
Bill of Lading (sea) / Air Way Bill (air)	Original + Copies
Commercial Invoice	Original (3) sets
Packing List	Original (3) sets
Route Permit from CBR for Relief Goods	Original (1) Set
Undertaking from Local office Embassy for Diplomatic Goods	Original (2) Sets
Exemption Certificate from Ministry of Commerce Afghanistan for Relief Goods	Original (1) Set
Certificate of Origin (if any)	Original Copy
Jawaznama (Import Permit) for Commercial Trade	Original Copy
Ilmokhabar (Afghan Invoice) for Commercial Trade	Original Copy

*Source:* USAID (2010), Pakistan Trade Project: Dwell Time Study, Deloitte Consulting, LLP.

or to NLC for arrangement of Boggies & Trucks / on-carriage from Karachi Port Trust upto Peshawar/Quetta Railway Station's by Rail/Road movement. Thereafter the delivery of goods (Container's & Break Bulk) is upto Pak-Afghan Border's through Trucks/Trailers.

Railways transportation time upto delivery at Pak-Afghan Border at Peshawar & Quetta is minimum ten days and maximum fourteen days. By road transportation time up to delivery at Pak-Afghan Border at Peshawar & Quetta is minimum six/ eight days and maximum eight / ten days. After necessary custom formalities at Pak-Afghan Border, cargo is checked at Afghanistan Custom Check Post and after necessary formalities and payment of dues it is transported by both Pakistani & Afghani Trucks to destination at Afghanistan and delivery is arranged at Consignee's Door.

Transit clearance time at Pak-Afghan Border is minimum one day and maximum two days. Custom Check Post in Afghanistan is based at Gumrock near to Jalalabad for destination to Kabul and another Custom Check Post at Spin Boldak for destination at Kandhar. Transportation Time up to delivery at Consignee Door's from Torkham Border to Kabul is minimum two/ three days and Chaman border to Kandhar is minimum two days.<sup>32</sup>



### ***2.5.3. Land Routes for Transit to Afghanistan***

#### ***A. Transit Arrangements at Pakistan Stations***

Pakistan has following Transit Stations / Points for the handling / transfer of relief goods as well as commercial trade cargo upto Pak-Afghan Border (Chaman and Torkham).<sup>33</sup>

- (i) Transit Stations at Karachi Sea Port  
Karachi Port Trust (KPT) / Port Qasim QICT Terminal for Relief Goods.  
KPT Railway Station for ATT Commercial Goods.
- (ii) Transit Stations at Quetta for South & West Afghanistan.  
NLC Dry Port for Relief Goods.  
Quetta Railway Station for Relief & ATT Commercial Goods.
- (iii) Transit Stations at Peshawar for North & East Afghanistan.  
NLC Dry Port for Relief Goods at Noshera, Peshawar.  
Peshawar Railway Station's (Cantt & City) for Relief & ATT Commercial Goods.

#### ***B. Land Routes for Transit to Afghanistan***

- (i) Karachi – Peshawar – Torkham Border – Kabul, Afghanistan :  
Karachi to Peshawar : Karachi Port – Hyderabad – Moro – Noshera Feroz – Ranipure – Sukkur By-Pass – Ghotki – Goth Machi – Sadiqabad – Bhawalpura – Khanewal – Lahore Sheikhupura – Gujranwala – Gujrat – Lalamusa – Jehlum – Rawalpindi – Texila – Attock – Cherat – Nowshera - Peshawar.  
Karachi to Peshawar - New Double Superhighway Metal Road (Total Distance = 1,707 Kms)
- (ii) Peshawar to Torkham Pak-Afghan Border : Peshawar – Khyber Tribal Area – Jamrud Fort – Ali Masjid – Gurgura – Sultan Khel – Landi Kotal – Khyber Pass – Torkham Pak-Afghan Border.  
(Total Distance = 55 Kms.)
- (iii) Torkham (Pak-Afghan Border) to Kabul, Afghanistan : Torkham Border – Gumrock – Jallalabad – Kabul.  
(Total Distance = 303 Kms.)  
Karachi to Kabul = Total Distance = 2,010 Kms (Approx).
- (iv) Karachi - Quetta - (Chaman Border) to Kandhar, Afghanistan :  
Karachi Port (0 Kms) – Hub Choki (25 Kms) - Gadani (35 Kms) – Vinder (95 Kms) – Uthal (130 Kms) – Bela (165 Kms) – Wadh (325 Kms) – Khuzdar (410 Kms) – Sohrab (500 Kms) – Kallat (530

Kms) – Mustang (610 Kms) – Quetta (670 Kms).

Karachi to Quetta - New Superhighway Metal Road = 670 kms.

(v) Quetta to Chaman Pak-Afghan Border : Quetta (0 Kms) – Kuchluck Town (18 Kms) – Yaro Town (35 Kms) – Qila Abdullah Town (85 Kms) – Shalabagh Mountain Area (99 Kms) – Chaman City (130 Kms) – Chaman Pak-Afghan Border (132 Kms).

(vi) Chaman (Pak-Afghan Border) to Kandhar, Afghanistan : Chaman Border (0 Kms) – Waish (0.6 Kms) – Spin Buldak Town (6 Kms) – Mall Bridge (40 Kms) – Argasan Bridge (74 Kms) – Kandhar Airport (84 Kms) – Kandhar City (111 Kms).

Karachi to Kandhar = Total Distance = 913 Kms. (Approx).

Afghan transit trade is a source of revenue for Pakistan in the shape of port charges for handling the transit goods. Similarly, revenue is being earned by Pakistan Railways, NLC and private sector transporters by transporting the transit goods through Pakistan. Furthermore, Gwadar port has also been included as an entry point for transit goods along with Karachi and Port Qasim. This will generate further economic activities. Under the new Agreement, Afghanistan has offered 17 transit routes to Pakistan to export goods to Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Pakistan has also offered 13 transit routes to Afghanistan to exports good to the world (see Table 8).

TABLE 8: TRANSIT TRADE ROUTES IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH APTTA

<i>In Pakistan</i>	<i>In Afghanistan</i>
1. Karachi/Port Qasim-Hyderabad-Sukkur-Multan-Faisalabad-Pindi Bhattian-Rawalpindi-Azakhel-Peshawar-Jamrud Terminal-Torkhum	1. Torkham-Kabul-Polekhumri-Ai Khanem (with Tajikistan)
2. Karachi/Port Qasim-Hyderabad-Rotodero-D.G.Khan-D.I.Khan-Kohat-Azakhel-Peshawar-Jamrud Terminal-Torkhum	2. Torkham-Kabul-Polekhumri-Sher Khan Bandar (with Tajikistan)
3. Karachi-Bela-Khuzdar-Kalat-Quetta-Chaman Terminal	3. Torkham-Kabul-Polekhumri-Nayed Abad-Hairatan (with Uzbekistan)
4. Karachi/Port Qasim-Hyderabad-Rotodero-D.G.Khan-D.I.Khan-Kohat-Bannu-Meram Shah-Ghulam Khan	4. Torkhum-Kabul-Polekhumri-Mazar-i-Sharif-Aqina (with Turkmenistan)

5. Gwadar-Pasni-Ormara-Liari-Khuzdar-Kalat-Quetta-Chaman Terminal	5. Torkhum-Kabul-Polekhumri-Mazar-i-Sharif-Torghundi (with Turkmenistan)
6. Gwadar-Turbat-Hoshab-Panjgur-Naag-Besima-Sorab-Kalat-Quetta-Chaman Terminal	6. Torkham-Srubi-Mahmmod Raqqi-Polekhumri-Ai Khanum (with Tajikistan)
7. Gwadar-Pasni-Ormara-Liari-Karachi-Rotodero-D.I.Khan-Kohat-Peshawar-Jamrud Terminal-Torkhum	7. Torkham-Srubi-Mahmmod Raqqi-Jabilsiraj-Polekhumri-Sher Khan Bandar (with Tajikistan)
8. Gwadar-Turbat-Hoshab-Panjgur-Naag-Besima-Khuzdar-Rotodero-D.I.Khan-Kohat-Peshawar-Jamrud Terminal-Torkham	8. Torkham-Srubi-Mahmmod Raqqi-Polekhumri-Nayeb Abad-Hairatan (with Uzbekistan)
9. Gwadar-Pasni-Ormara-Liari-Karachi-Rotodero-D.I.Khan-Kohat-Bannu- Meram Shah-Ghulam Khan	9. Torkham-Srubi-Mahmmod Raqqi-Jabilsiraj-Polekhumri-Mazar-i-Sharif-Aqina (with Turkmenistan)
10. Gwadar-Turbat-Hoshab-Panjgur-Naag-Besima-Khuzdar-Rotodero-D.I.Khan-Bannu-Meram Shah-Ghulam Khan	10. Torkham-Srubi-Mahmmod Raqqi-Jabilsiraj-Polekhumri- Mazar-i-Sharif-Torghundi (with Turkmenistan)
11. Gwadar-Turbat-Hoshab-Panjgur-Naag-Kalat-Quetta-Zhob-Meram Shah-Ghulam Khan	11. Ghulam Khan-Kabul-Polekhumri-Ai Khanem (with Tajikistan)
12. Torkham-Jamrud Terminal-Peshawar (Motorway M-1)-Rawalpindi/ Islamabad (Motorway M-2)-Lahore-Wagha	12. Ghulam Khan-Kabul-Polekhumri-Sher Khan Bandar (with Tajikistan)
13. Khunjrab-Sost-Chilas-Mansehra-Hasanabdal-Peshawar- Jamrud Terminal-Torkham	13. Ghulam Khan-Kabul-Polekhumri-Nayeb Abad-Hairatan (with Uzbekistan)
	14. Ghulam Khan-Kabul-Polekhumri-Mazar-i-Sharif-Aqina (with Turkmenistan)
	15. Ghulam Khan-Kabul-Polekhumri-Mazar-i-Sharif-Torghundi (with Turkmenistan)
	16. Durah Pass-Iskatul-Gulkhana-Ishkasim (with Tajikistan)
	17. Darkot-Broghil Pass-Sarhad-Ishkasim (with Tajikistan)



Afghan imports only arrive from Karachi and Port Qasim.<sup>34</sup> The official border crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan, located at Torkham in Afghanistan, is the main crossing used to transport goods along trade routes assigned for APTTA transit trade. On average, 100 containers carrying commercial goods and 30-40 containers carrying non-commercial cargo cross Torkham on a daily basis.<sup>35</sup> However, trade flows at the Torkham crossing are much higher in summer than in winter. Approximately 1,000 containers cross daily in summer, while only 30-40 containers cross on a daily basis in winter.<sup>36</sup> Transit trade figures are recorded manually and then processed using a computer program. Torkham Station border crossing is primarily a "Trade Facilitation Centre" that merely monitors trade and transit trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Therefore, drug smuggling prevention is not a priority at the crossing. Containers, trucks or vehicles travelling to or from Afghanistan through Torkham are not thoroughly searched. UNODC experts observed that customs officials often stamped and signed cargo receipts and allowed trucks and containers to cross the border to Pakistan without conducting any checks.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the crossing is not equipped with the necessary equipment to check cargo for drugs and none of the staff has been trained to conduct such inspections. Although a drug detection kit has been provided by UNODC for use at the crossing, it is not apparently being put to use.

#### *D. Transportation Regulations*

A number of APTTA transportation regulations have been greatly simplified to ease the flow of transit trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan, but that may also inadvertently facilitate opiate and chemical precursor smuggling. In some cases, goods may be transported in containers, open trucks (for bulk and oversized cargo) and other transportation units used to transport perishable goods such as fruits. In all other cases, transit goods must be stored in sealed trucks known as "closed trucks", which must meet international specifications. Goods in closed trucks are checked while being loaded and offloaded as part of the transit process, in order to ensure that the container seals have not been broken. However, unlike Pakistan, Afghanistan has not enforced such a measure at control points. Furthermore, there is no guarantee when goods are transported in sealed containers that drugs are not concealed within the cargo during the trans-shipment process.

In accordance with APTTA, truck drivers from Afghanistan and

Pakistan are permitted to transport goods across either country upon receiving a “temporary admission document”. Thus, Afghan trucks may deliver goods via Pakistan all the way to India, rather than having to reload their goods onto Pakistani trucks at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.<sup>38</sup> Afghan and Pakistani driving licenses and vehicle registration documents are also recognized and accepted in both countries, enabling truck drivers to deliver transit goods directly through each of the two countries.

Pakistan and Afghanistan have begun to harmonize their regulations and standards for inspecting and certifying trucks used for transit trade. However, each country remains responsible for licensing its own transport operators (e.g. trucking firms). In order to counteract smuggling, information sharing between the customs offices in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been enhanced and tracking devices are installed on containers, which must be monitored by the Afghan and Pakistani customs departments on a 24-hour basis. Currently, Afghan vehicles transporting goods through Pakistan are not required to install such tracking devices. Therefore, there is still a high probability that drugs are being trafficked from Afghanistan through Pakistan to other destinations within sealed trucks.

### *E. Customs Checks*

The handling of goods at any of Pakistan’s three seaports follows a clear customs procedure. When goods are to be exported from Karachi seaport, customs officials initially unload the cargo in order to conduct an inspection and verify that all the container seals are intact. The containers are then stored in the assigned Afghan transit shed, while explosives, hazardous goods and heavy cargo exceeding five tons in weight must be placed in special storage. If the goods are to be subsequently exported by rail to India, the train wagons must also be examined by customs officials. Such inspections can only be officially completed and recorded once it has been confirmed that all the seals are intact. Copies of invoices must be provided to the owner or agent and the frontier customs official at Peshawar or Chaman. Only then may the transit containers be resealed and removed from the transit sheds under the supervision of the customs authorities.<sup>39</sup>

In spite of such regulations, the probability that a container carrying drugs will be inspected by customs officials at a port of entry or exit in either Afghanistan or Pakistan is very low. That is because, in accordance

with APTTA, customs officials may only inspect the contents of up to 5 per cent of the containers at a point of entry into Afghanistan or Pakistan. They may not undertake any additional inspections unless it is discovered that there have been regulatory violations. Therefore, the majority of goods packed and sealed as Afghan or Pakistani transit cargo are not checked at BCP or dry ports on either side of the border. As demonstrated in the diagram above, transit cargo is only checked once it reaches its final destination. Accordingly, drug traffickers are able to load drugs into sealed containers that appear to meet international requirements, before transporting them in closed trucks from Afghanistan to Pakistan with a relatively low risk of discovery.

#### *F. Dry Ports along APTTA Transit Transportation Routes*

Overall, there are 17 dry ports in Afghanistan and 13 in Pakistan.<sup>40</sup> Of those, the Inland Customs Depot (ICD) in Kabul and the dry port at Naibabad in Afghanistan play a major role in the trans-shipment of transit goods from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Central Asia to Pakistan. In Pakistan, dry ports at Peshawar, Faisalabad, Chaman, Quetta and Karachi are primarily in charge of handling APTTA transit trade going to and from Afghanistan.

The ICD in Kabul mainly handles cargo transported along the Afghan Ring Road to Pakistan's seaports. The Afghan Ring Road provides the best road link between Kabul and Western and Central Asia. Therefore, the Kabul ICD is involved in trade flows heading for the southern provinces of Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as those going northwards to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In recent years, the efficiency of the dry port has been greatly improved. For instance, the truck release time at the Kabul ICD has been reduced from 18 hours (in 2003), to less than 8 hours (from 2006 onwards). Furthermore, the time required to undertake customs controls has been reduced from 7 to 4.5 hours.

The majority of goods passing through the Hairatan BCP and Naibabad dry port in northern Afghanistan, near the border with Uzbekistan, originate from the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, China, the United Arab Emirates (Dubai), the United States of America and Germany. The Hairatan BCP primarily receives cargo arriving on the Termez-Hairatan railway from Uzbekistan. On average, 100-120 containers are sent to and from Hairatan BCP each day.<sup>41</sup> At the Hairatan BCP and Naibabad dry port, cargo is trans-shipped from trains onto trucks, which then travel along the assigned transit routes to Pakistan.

The major dry ports at Chaman and Quetta in Pakistan primarily facilitate the transit of goods between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. Quetta has two dry ports, one of which is responsible for railway trans-shipment, the other for road vehicles. Chaman Customs House is located 120 kms from Quetta. Goods imported from the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Chaman Customs House include chickpeas, coriander, bitumen, scrap metal, glassware, plastic goods, petroleum oils, organic chemicals, cumin seeds, medicinal herbs, carpets and dry fruits, among other things. The Chaman dry port is especially busy, with around 24,200 containers passing through it between January and March 2012 (see Table 9).

TABLE 9: CONTAINERS PASSING THROUGH CHAMAN DRY PORT  
(JANUARY 2008 - MARCH 2012)

2008	2009	2010	2011	March 2012
76,500	86,200	76,000	90,300	24,200

Source: UNODC/COPAC, Research Report on the Capacity of Border Control Points and Dry Ports in Balochistan, April 2012.

In addition, approximately 500 vehicles, including pick-up trucks, private cars, jeeps and motorbikes, cross the border between Afghanistan and Balochistan province in Pakistan each day.<sup>42</sup> Although Peshawar dry port is located at a nodal point along the main transit routes between Pakistan and Afghanistan, it does not handle large amounts of cargo. This is mainly due to the lack of available infrastructure and limited facilities. For example, the port has no boundary walls, no drainage system, limited space for offices and storage and no functioning customs controls.<sup>43</sup> Overall, there are 45-50 customs officials employed at Peshawar. However, only 1-2 containers are handled daily for export, while 5-7 vehicles delivering imports are handled per day.<sup>44</sup> Goods imported to Peshawar dry port include electronics, industrial raw materials, fabrics, tea, oil, generators and related accessories, tires and tubes. Exports include handicrafts, rocks and carpets.

Around 20-25 cars, 8 containers and 7 trucks and trolleys deliver imports to Islamabad dry port on a daily basis.<sup>45</sup> Most imports to the dry port are from China, while commercial goods such as wheel hubs are exported to Germany and the United States.<sup>46</sup> On average, only two containers carrying exports leave Islamabad dry port each month. The entire premises of the dry port are walled off and 58 customs officials



conduct cargo checks and inspections. Faisalabad dry port, located on the Jhumra road, is an export-oriented port that delivers goods to Karachi. In 2007, it handled around 33,000 export cargo containers and 5,500 import consignments.<sup>47</sup> However, in recent years, the volume of trade passing through the port has significantly decreased. Currently, 120 containers are handled per month.<sup>48</sup> Most imports consist of used machinery, while cotton and textile materials are exported to countries in the Persian Gulf (mainly the UAE).

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- Corridor I: Karachi-Peshawar-Jalalabad-Kabul
- Corridor II: Karachi-Chaman-Kandahar-Herat

Most APTTA-related trade takes place along the road leading from Karachi seaport and Port Qasim to Torkham in Afghanistan. Currently, Karachi dry port handles roughly 75 per cent of the total trade coming from Karachi seaport and Port Qasim, which together manage 95 per cent of Pakistan's external trade. Those seaports are also the main points of entry for Afghan transit goods. Karachi dry port has an overall annual capacity of 25 million tons and is consequently extremely busy.<sup>56</sup> The high level of trade conducted at the two seaports enhances opportunities for drugs to be smuggled undetected via licit trade flows.

Around 10-12 containers also arrive on trolleys at Lahore dry port from Karachi seaport and Port Qasim on a daily basis. (On rare occasions, containers that have left Port Qasim are delivered to dry ports at Rawalpindi and Multan for inspection.) However, customs officials at Lahore dry port report that a decreasing number of rail containers have been passing through the port over the past three years.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, no trains have departed for Karachi seaport and Port Qasim for quite some time. In Pakistan, BCP and dry ports often employ an insufficient number of officials and lack the necessary technical equipment to carry out effective cargo inspections. For instance, at the Peshawar and Islamabad dry ports, the only device available to assist in the inspection of goods is a mobile scanner.<sup>58</sup>

The scanner can be used to inspect small items such as handbags and other passenger luggage, but is unable to scan or search larger trolleys or containers. Although there have been several opiate seizures and some acetic anhydride seizures in Peshawar and Islamabad, it is possible that some opiates and acetic anhydride may pass through the dry port undetected, due to the poor quality of inspections. Naibabad dry port in Afghanistan also lacks any form of effective inspection equipment. Customs officials at Naibabad informed UNODC experts that they conducted visual inspections without any technical assistance.<sup>59</sup>

The situation is similar at the Chaman and Quetta dry ports in Pakistan. Aside from three x-ray scanners installed on vans, which were supplied by UNODC, there is no other equipment available to inspect goods passing through either port. Furthermore, even those devices remain unused, since none of the staff has been trained to operate them. Despite the fact that there are 10-12 officers and 30-40 constables employed at

both Chaman and Quetta, they all lack adequate training.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, only 5-10 per cent of all imports and exports are randomly checked at either of the ports. As a result, when an export consignment consisting of 10 containers of rice arrives on trucks, only one or two of the containers will be selected for inspection. If customs officials at either dry port receive information regarding a suspicious container delivery, the entire consignment should be inspected. However, due to a heavy workload and the high volume of trade handled at both dry ports, it is often not possible for customs officials to check the entire batch of containers. Moreover, officials at the BCP in Torkham and dry ports in Chaman and Quetta are mandated primarily to generate revenue and facilitate trade activities, rather than prevent drug smuggling, which is considered to be a secondary responsibility.<sup>61</sup>

Although there are 215 customs officials employed at Faisalabad dry port in Pakistan, there is no drug detection equipment, container scanners or search devices available to assist in cargo inspections. Customs officials informed UNODC experts that in the case of containers exported from Faisalabad dry port to Karachi, the Pakistani Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) assists in the clearance process.<sup>62</sup> The ANF also assists in the clearance process for most consignments exported from Islamabad dry port.<sup>63</sup> At Faisalabad and Islamabad dry ports, the ANF staff thoroughly search containers with the help of sniffer dogs and other drug detection devices. Once the inspection has been completed officials sign the shipping bill to authorize the onward transportation of cargo.

## **2.6. Smuggling through Afghan-Pak Transit Trade Routes**

One of the key obstacles in the way of ATTA is the substantial smuggling of goods. These goods are imported originally by Afghanistan from Pakistan, but make their way back in to Pakistan. According to Federal Board of Revenue figures, the value of total smuggled goods into Pakistan stands between US\$ 4 to US\$ 5 billion.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, 70 to 75 per cent of the revenue losses to the country have been due to those items that were exported to Afghanistan under ATTA, but find their way back into Pakistan.<sup>65</sup> Customs are of the view that out of a total of US\$ 5 billion worth goods smuggled into the country, 75 percent of it happens due to the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA).<sup>66</sup> The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has said that goods worth at least Rs150 billion are smuggled into the country through the Afghan Transit Trade route every year, and that the national exchequer loses over Rs10 billion in uncollected

taxes due to smuggling of auto parts alone.<sup>67</sup>

Pakistan believes allowing India to supply goods under the new transit regime i.e. APTA would be detrimental for Pakistan in a number of ways. Allowing Indian exports of above mentioned products to Afghanistan under new agreement would have direct impact on Pakistan's industry. For the most part, the Indian goods are substantially cheaper than in Pakistan. Even with the added transportation cost and tariff, India will maintain a competitive advantage over similar Pakistani products. If India is allowed to export to Afghanistan, these inexpensive products and goods will eventually be smuggled en masse into Pakistani markets from across the border.

So, if Indian goods are allowed entry into Afghanistan through a fresh ATT agreement, there are fears of the Pakistani markets getting cheap Indian goods. This would increase the revenue losses for Pakistan. The industrial infrastructure of Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces of Pakistan, that border Afghanistan, is already collapsing under the pressure of Afghan smuggling and extremism.

Due to the continuing deadlock between India and Pakistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan stand to lose more as compared to India, which is already reaping the benefits of its larger size and from its Look East Policy. "Pakistan's economy and industries appear ill prepared for the arriving forces of globalization and will have to become more competitive. Future would have to be envisioned not only from the prospect of conflict but also opportunities. Sooner rather than later Pakistani businessmen will have to confront the forces of open markets, whether they are at home, Afghanistan or Central Asia".<sup>68</sup>

In order to safeguard the economy from the adverse effects of the Afghan transit trade, greater responsibility rests with the functionaries of the government to strictly control smuggling. The economy's interests would be best served only if anti-corruption and anti-smuggling laws are implemented strictly, under-invoicing is checked and the entire economy is documented. In addition to this, the government should take the businessmen on board before enacting APTTA and take the following measures to reduce the scope of smuggling:<sup>69</sup> (a) Adequate mitigating clauses should be included in the trade arrangement to deal with the legitimate concerns of domestic industries, (b) A provision of survey to quantitatively restrict imports under APTTA needs to be incorporated, (c) Modalities of collecting custom duty should be specified and (d) Commodities should be exchanged with the opening of letter of credits

(LCs) in Afghanistan instead of Pakistan, as is the case at present. The smuggling also impacts the government revenues substantially. Estimates of revenue losses based on statutory rates of customs duties/sales tax on imports for an estimated Rs.83 billion worth of re-exports, were in the range of Rs 60-67 billion during 1999-2000.<sup>70</sup>

### **3. DIRECTION AND COMPOSITION OF EXPORTS: INDIA, PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN**

The huge reconstruction market in Afghanistan offers immense export opportunities to the neighboring countries. Both Pakistan and India are thus natural competitors aiming to increase their respective shares in the Afghan market. In addition to that, access to the Afghan market holds the key to penetrating the energy rich but landlocked Central Asian Republics (CARs).<sup>71</sup> This section examines the pattern of global, inter-regional and regional exports of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan over two decades from 1990 to 2013.

APTTA will encourage economic growth for both countries by building stronger commercial relationships between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It will strengthen economic ties and ensure smooth and efficient movement of goods through both countries and across the region. The agreement makes the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) easier and cheaper to implement. SAFTA will lower tariffs for Afghan goods across the region. APTTA will also contribute to greater regional security as Afghanistan and Pakistan work together for mutual economic growth and prosperity.

#### **3.1. Direction of Exports**

##### ***3.1.1. India's Exports to the selected Regions and SAARC countries***

India's share in global exports more than doubled from merely 0.7 per cent in 2000 to 1.5 per cent in 2013, while exports value rose from US \$52 billion in 2002-03 to US \$303.7 billion in 2012-13. Imports also saw a rapid rise from \$50.5 billion in 2002-03 to \$488 billion. The last decade witnessed a consistent upward trend until 2008-09, but the global economic crisis had a dampening effect on exports which declined by 3 per cent to \$178.75 billion while imports declined by 5 per cent to \$288.372 billion in 2009-10. India rebounded with exports registering an increase of 40.5 per cent to touch \$251.13 billion and imports rising by 28.2 per cent to \$369.76 billion in 2012-13. In 2010-11, India crossed the US \$200 billion mark for

the first time in its export history. The financial year 2011-12 registered a growth of 21 per cent in exports which reached US \$303.7 billion. Based on these encouraging figures, the country set an ambitious merchandise export target of US \$500 billion for 2013-14.<sup>72</sup> It is a positive sign that India's exports which were concentrated on the OECD countries for several decades are now changing their focus. Recent years have witnessed the emergence of Asia as a major export destination with its share increasing from 38.6 per cent in 2000-01 to 55 per cent in 2012-13.

The Ministry of Commerce of India unveiled an Action Plan in May 2011 that would enable it to double the country's exports to \$ 500 billion. It was based on a strategy hinged on the following pillars: (i) Developing products with a substantial growth potential, (ii) Market diversification strategy, (iii) Promoting high technology exports, and (iv) Building Brand India. In 2011, India identified 41 countries under special markets schemes<sup>73</sup> with a view to increase the competitiveness of exports with a geographical targeting and the Foreign Trade Policy Supplement released in June 2012, added 26 more countries to that list.<sup>74</sup> India aims to reach the aforesaid levels with the help of market diversification and incentives like Market Linked Focus Product Scheme and zero percent EPCG (Export Promotion Capital Goods) scheme announced in the foreign trade policy.

Various studies on India-Pakistan trade have so far demonstrated that the relaxation of constraints in the way of bilateral trade would benefit both countries. The theoretical argument is that countries in relative geographical proximity tend to trade with each other than with more distant countries owing to lower transport and communication costs. A study by Amita Batra (2006) using an augmented gravity model showed that all three gravity effects were statistically significant for India- Pakistan trade.<sup>75</sup> Another study by ICRIER (2004) showed a much higher volume - about US\$ 10-11 billion (Pakistan 55 percent textiles; India 90 percent non-textiles).<sup>76</sup> Ijaz Nabi and Anjum Nasim (2001) estimated that trade between India and Pakistan could increase by a factor of three if trade relations were characterized by MFN status and maximum tariff rate of 50 per cent.<sup>77</sup>

State Bank of Pakistan (2006) study came to the conclusion that bilateral trade could multiply by five times if the MFN status is granted and non tariff barriers are removed.<sup>78</sup> Naqvi and Schuler (2007) estimated that the trade between the two countries could jump from \$2.5 billion in 2007-08 to \$ 5-10 billion or 2 to 4 times its current basis. Net welfare gains are positive in every single scenario - conservative to optimistic. Trade

will lead to some limited specialization and trade in intermediate inputs for use in exports to high income countries. Granting MFN treatment to India would bring gains to Pakistan and an FTA would generate even larger benefits.<sup>79</sup>

### *3.1.2. Pakistan's Exports to the selected Regions and SAARC countries*

Between 2000 and 2013 the share of EU in Pakistan's export market declined from 30 percent to 21 percent, while that of the NAFTA region declined from 27 percent to 17 per cent during the same period. Within the SAARC region, Pakistan's market share increased from 30 per cent in 2000 to 64 percent in 2013. Pakistan's market share in India, however, declined from 14 per cent to 10 percent over the same decade. During this period, the share of Sri Lanka also declined from 20 percent to 10 per cent. From 2005 onwards, however, Pakistan's market share in Sri Lanka increased modestly. The implementation of the Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement in early 2005 could have contributed to this trend.

### *3.1.3. Afghanistan's Exports to the selected Regions and SAARC countries*

Export share with the European Union (EU) fell drastically, from 62 per cent in 1990 to 11 per cent in 2013. Since 2000 its export share with Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries has gone up. Nearly half of its exports are destined for the SAARC region. Within this region, Afghanistan's predominant market is almost equally divided between India and Pakistan. Although many reforms in trade, customs and transport regimes have been carried out in cooperation with donors assistance, much has to be done to overcome those increasing transit/trade challenges stipulated in the 2003 Almaty Program of Action.<sup>80</sup>

While Afghanistan shares the major features of LDCs such as poor physical infrastructure, weak institutional capacities, remoteness from world markets, and a high vulnerability to external shocks, It has prioritized to develop adequate national transport networks and efficient transit systems, to promote regional or sub-regional economic integration, and encourage foreign direct investment in economic activities leading to expand trade. In Afghanistan, service sector is playing important role in economic development and contributing around 48 per cent of their GDP followed by agriculture (28 per cent), Industry (21 per cent) and taxes on imports is merely 3 per cent in 2010-11.<sup>81</sup>

## **3.2. Composition of Exports**

### ***3.2.1. India's Exports Composition***

India's export basket has also been diversified. Traditionally labour intensive goods were the major export items but now it is slowly changing to technology intensive goods. The share of textiles in the export basket declined from 24 per cent in 2000-01 to 9 per cent in 2012-13. There has been substantial increase in value added exports with engineering goods constituting the largest component at US \$60 billion, followed by gems and jewellery at US \$46 billion, textiles at US \$14 billion and pharmaceutical products at US \$13 billion. Along with traditional export items such as textiles, plastic products, gems and jewellery, India has ventured into new items like engineering goods, automobiles, auto-components, and electronics which contribute a large chunk in the country's overall exports.<sup>82</sup>

In the year 2013, some commodities registered increasing trends in India's exports as compared to the year 2000 which include (i) Mineral Products; (ii) Base Metals and Articles of Base Metal ; (iii) Vehicles, Aircraft, and other Transport Equipment; (iv) Plastics and Rubber, and Articles thereof; and (v) Prepared Foodstuffs, Beverages, and Tobacco. While, there are few commodities in the India's exports basket which registered declining trends during the period between 2000 and 2013 which include (i) Vegetable Products; (ii) Pearls; Precious Stones and Metals; Jewellery, Coin; (iii) Textiles and Textile Articles ; (iv) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries ; (v) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment; Parts and Accessories of such Articles; (vi) Live Animals; Animal Products; (vii) Hides and Skins; Leather and Articles thereof; and (viii) Travel Goods, Handbags, and Similar Containers.

### ***3.2.2. Pakistan's Exports Composition***

In the year 2013, some commodities registered increasing trends in Pakistan's exports as compared to the year 2000 which include (i) Vegetable Products; (ii) Mineral Products; (iii) Prepared Foodstuffs, Beverages, and Tobacco ; (iv) Live Animals; Animal Products; (v) Plastics and Rubber, and Articles thereof; (vi) Base Metals and Articles of Base Metal; (vii) Pearls; Precious Stones and Metals; Jewellery, Coin; (viii) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries; and (ix) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment; Parts and Accessories of such Articles. While, there are few commodities registering declining trends in Pakistan's exports in



2013 as compared to the year 2000 which include (i) Miscellaneous Manufactured Articles; (ii) Optical, Photographic, Measuring, and Medical Apparatus; Clocks and Watches; Musical Instruments; (iii) Hides and Skins; Leather and Articles thereof; Travel Goods, Handbags, and Similar Containers; and (iv) Textiles and Textile Articles.

### ***3.2.3. Share of Common Products in Indian and Pakistani Exports Basket to Afghanistan***

Table 10 presents a comparative picture of Indian and Pakistani exports (value and percentage share) items to the world during the years 2005 and 2013 to understand which commodities dominate in their exports basket. Pakistan dominates in exports to Afghanistan as compared to India. India's export to Afghanistan was merely 0.15 per cent of their world exports which increased marginally and reached 0.18 per cent in 2013. On the other hand, Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan dominated with 6.64 per cent of their world export in 2005 which increased significantly and reached 10.50 per cent in 2013.

During the period between 2005 and 2013, the following commodities registered an increasing trends in India's exports to Afghanistan which include (i) Hides and Skins; Leather and Articles thereof; (ii) Footwear, Headgear, Umbrellas; Artificial Flowers; (iii) Prepared Foodstuffs, Beverages, and Tobacco ; (iv) Textiles and Textile Articles; (v) Wood Pulp; Paper, Paperboard, and Articles thereof (vi) Pearls; Precious Stones and Metals; Jewelry, Coin; and (vii) Articles of Stone or Ceramics; Glass and Glassware. While during the same period, there are few commodities registering declining trends in India's exports to Afghanistan which include (i) Plastics and Rubber, and Articles thereof; (ii) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries; (iii) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment; (iv) Optical, Photographic, Measuring, and Medical Apparatus; (v) Miscellaneous Manufactured Articles; (vi) Live Animals; Animal Products; (vii) Articles of Wood, Cork, or Plaiting Materials; (viii) Vegetable Products; (ix) Vehicles, Aircraft, and other Transport Equipment; (x) Works of Art, Collectors' Pieces, and Antiques ; and (xi) Base Metals and Articles of Base Metal.

On the other hand, few products in Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan basket registered increasing trends during the period between 2005 and 2013, which include (i) Articles of Wood, Cork, or Plaiting Materials; (ii) Mineral Products; (iii) Articles of Stone or Ceramics; Glass and Glassware; (iv) Vehicles, Aircraft, and other Transport Equipment; (v) Vegetable

Products; (vi) Live Animals; Animal Products; (vii) Wood Pulp; Paper, Paperboard, and Articles thereof ; and (viii) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment. The products which registered declining trends during the same period include (i) Miscellaneous Manufactured Articles; (ii) Footwear, Headgear, Umbrellas; Artificial Flowers; (iii) Optical, Photographic, Measuring, and Medical Apparatus; (iv) Plastics and Rubber, and Articles thereof; (v) Base Metals and Articles of Base Metal; (vi) Prepared Foodstuffs, Beverages, and Tobacco; and (vii) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (see Table 10).

#### 4. IMPLICATION OF PROVIDING ACCESS TO INDIA

This section explores the potential impact of extending transit rights to India under the revised Afghan Transit Trade Agreement on Pakistan's bilateral trade with Afghanistan and beyond with the Central Asian Republics (CARs). In order to estimate the potential or expected impact of the new transit trade agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan (APTTA), it is important to review the previous trends of exports particularly from India and Pakistan to Afghanistan and CARs. Therefore, we examine the changes and patterns of trade since 2000-2013 in: (a) India's Exports to Afghanistan; (b) Pakistan's Exports to Afghanistan; (c) Indian Exports to Central Asian Republics (CARs); and (d) Pakistan's Exports to Central Asian Republics (CARs). In order to examine the implications of providing access to India under new agreement, an attempt has also been made here to make a comparison of the major export items of Pakistan to Afghanistan with the share of Indian exports of the same products to Afghanistan.

##### 4.1. India's Exports to Afghanistan

Afghanistan holds strategic importance for India because it's a gateway to energy-rich Central Asian states. Keeping in perspective the geographical importance of Afghanistan and as a potential route for access to Central Asia, India offered over US\$ 2 billion since 2001 for Afghanistan's reconstruction, making it the largest regional donor to the country.<sup>83</sup> Bilateral trade between India and Afghanistan has been on the rise from 2003 to 2011. India's exports to Afghanistan was merely US\$ 23.31 million in 2000 which more than doubled in 2002 (US\$ 50.11 Million) and since then it took a quantum jump and reached upto US\$ 504.57 million in 2011(WITS Database, 2013). According to DGCIS database,

TABLE 10: INDIAN AND PAKISTANI EXPORTS TO AFGHANISTAN AS  
PERCENTAGE OF THEIR WORLD EXPORT: PRODUCT-WISE

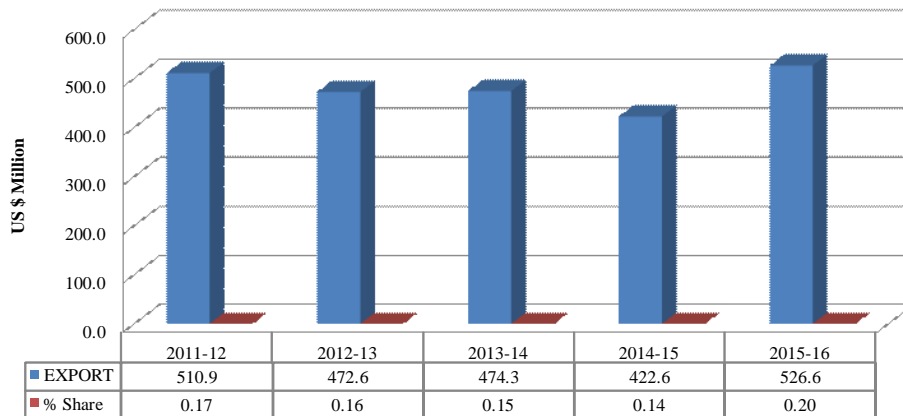
<i>Section &amp; Chapter-wise Commodity</i>	<i>India</i>		<i>Pakistan</i>	
	2005	2013	2005	2013
I : Live Animals; Animal Products (01-05)	0.26	0.10	9.21	16.22
II : Vegetable Products (06-14)	0.04	0.02	10.71	17.57
III : Animal or Vegetable Fats, Oils, and Waxes (15)	0.00	0.00	99.83	98.91
IV : Prepared Foodstuffs, Beverages, and Tobacco (16-24)	0.25	0.83	27.91	21.76
V : Mineral Products (25-27)	0.00	0.01	41.30	51.01
VI : Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (28-38)	0.33	0.23	26.75	21.37
VII : Plastics and Rubber, and Articles thereof (39-40)	0.42	0.27	34.14	18.10
VIII : Hides and Skins; Leather and Articles thereof; ... (41-43)	0.00	0.02	0.18	0.01
IX : Articles of Wood, Cork, or Plaiting Materials (44-46)	0.13	0.04	68.25	85.40
X : Wood Pulp; Paper, Paperboard, and Articles thereof (47- 49)	0.04	0.09	13.10	15.94
XI : Textiles and Textile Articles (50-63)	0.30	0.74	0.22	0.18
XII : Footwear, Headgear, Umbrellas; Artificial Flowers (64-67)	0.01	0.04	12.47	2.74
XIII : Articles of Stone or Ceramics; Glass and Glassware (68-70)	0.01	0.06	21.29	34.16
XIV : Pearls; Precious Stones and Metals; Jewelry, Coin (71)	0.00	0.08	0.18	0.00
XV : Base Metals and Articles of Base Metal (72-83)	0.09	0.07	42.80	32.53
XVI : Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment; (84-85)	0.22	0.14	10.32	15.55
XVII : Vehicles, Aircraft, and other Transport Equipment (86-89)	0.19	0.02	11.65	20.73
XVIII : Optical, Photographic, Measuring, and Medical Apparatus; ... (90-92)	0.24	0.12	0.55	0.06

XIX : Arms and Ammunition; Parts And Accessories thereof (93)	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.64
XX : Miscellaneous Manufactured Articles (94-96)	0.23	0.11	3.84	3.02
XXI : Works of Art, Collectors' Pieces, and Antiques (97-98)	0.07	0.02	0.00	0.00
Grand Total (01 to 97) :	0.15	0.18	6.64	10.50

Source: MACMAP online database, January, 2014.

India's export to Afghanistan was US\$ 510.9 million in 2011-12 which increased marginally to US\$ 526.6 million in 2015-16 (Chart 3). India's export to Afghanistan as percentage of world export is far below from the existing potential. India hopes its investment in the Iranian port at Chabahar will allow it to gain trading access to Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan. Pakistan currently allows Afghanistan transit rights for its exports to India, but does not allow goods to move from India to Afghanistan.<sup>84</sup>

**Chart 3. India's Exports to Afghanistan (US \$ Million and % Share)**



During the period between 2003 and 2013, there has been considerable rise in the exports of Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes (HS-24), manmade filaments (HS-54), Umbrellas, walking-sticks, seat-sticks, whips, etc (HS-66), Dairy products, eggs, honey, edible animal products (HS-04). However, there has been decline in rubber and articles thereof (HS-40) and pharmaceutical products (HS-30).

The top five exports of India to Afghanistan include (i) HS-24: Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes; (ii) HS-54: Manmade filaments; (iii) HS-66: Umbrellas, walking-sticks, seat-sticks, whips, etc; (iv) HS-04: Dairy products, eggs, honey, edible animal products; and (v) HS-58: Special woven or tufted fabric, lace, tapestry etc which all together constituted around 17 per cent of India's exports to Afghanistan in 2013.

As regards Afghanistan, potential items of exports would include machinery and equipment and parts (electrical & non-electrical); transport equipment; iron and steel products; dairy produce; tea; sugar & sugar confectionary; cereal preparations; fruit juices; yarn and fabrics; garments; rubber pneumatic tyres, pharmaceutical products; carpets and other floor coverings; knitted and crocheted fabrics (Exim Bank Report, 2011).

The commodities which dominate in India's exports basket to

Afghanistan which include (i) Textiles and Textile Articles (48.72 per cent); (ii) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (12.45 per cent); (iii) Prepared Foodstuffs, Beverages, and Tobacco (11.94 per cent); (iv) Pearls; Precious Stones and Metals; Jewellery, Coin (8.30 per cent); (v) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment (6.22 per cent); (vi) Parts and Accessories of such Articles (6.22 per cent); (vii) Plastics and Rubber, and Articles thereof (4.34 per cent); (ix) Base Metals and Articles of Base Metal (2.95 per cent); and (x) Live Animals; Animal Products (1.29 per cent).

#### **4.2. Pakistan's Exports to Afghanistan**

At present Afghan imports are dominated by Pakistan and the balance of trade between the two countries is in favour of Pakistan. The official trade between the two countries is more than one billion dollars. Balance of trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan has reached one and a half billion US dollars.<sup>85</sup> However, according to the Area Study Centre for Afghanistan at the University of Peshawar, the total volume of trade (official and unofficial) between the two countries is close to \$12 billion.<sup>86</sup> On the one hand Pakistan desires increase in regional trade and market access but on the other hand doing so could provide India an economic advantage, by allowing it to reach the markets of Afghanistan and Central Asia through its territory.

Pakistan is currently Afghanistan's largest trade partner both in terms of imports and exports. Moreover, trade statistics from the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) indicate that Pakistan has been Afghanistan's largest trade partner throughout the past decade. According to the statistics published by the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), there has been a steady increase in Afghanistan's exports to and imports from Pakistan.<sup>87</sup> Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan was merely US\$ 408.20 million in 2003 which jumped upto US\$ 2660.30 million in 2013 despite some fluctuating trends between 2004 and 2008.

Since 2001, a multi-billion dollar foreign funded reconstruction efforts continued in Afghanistan. A large part of the demand for construction items, ranging from cement and electrical products, has been met by Pakistan. Pakistani industries and companies have also been fulfilling the demands of Afghanistan for its medical and food needs, such as pharmaceuticals, packed milk, drinking water, livestock, wheat, rice and other agriculture produce. Up to 80 per cent of the supplies for NATO

forces, also make their way through the seaport of Karachi to Afghanistan. Landlocked Afghanistan and Coalition Forces have been heavily dependent on Pakistan, as the country provides not only the shortest but also the most economical and politically viable access point.

Looking at the product wise composition of Pakistan's exports basket to Afghanistan, the top 20 export products which demonstrated highest percentage share in 2013 as compared to 2003 include (i) HS-45 : Cork and articles of cork; (ii) HS-04: Dairy products, eggs, honey, edible animal products; (iii) HS-44: Wood and articles of wood, wood charcoal; (iv) HS-34: Soaps, lubricants, waxes, candles, modelling pastes; (v) HS-01: Live animals; (vi) HS-73: Articles of iron or steel; (vii) HS-32: Tanning, dyeing extracts, tannins, dyes, pigments etc; (viii) HS-19: Cereal, flour, starch, milk preparations and products; (ix) HS-07: Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers; (x) HS-70: Glass and glassware; (xi) HS-27: Mineral fuels, oils, distillation products, etc; (xii) HS-18: Cocoa and cocoa preparations; (xiii) HS-80: Other base metals, cermets, articles thereof; (xiv) HS-20: Vegetable, fruit, nut, etc food preparations; (xv) HS-21: Miscellaneous edible preparations; (xvi) HS-17: Sugars and sugar confectionery; (xvii) HS-69: Ceramic products; (xviii) HS-08: Edible fruit, nuts, peel of citrus fruit, melons; (xix) HS-40: Rubber and articles thereof; and (xx) HS-36: Explosives, pyrotechnics, matches, pyrophorics, etc.

However, there are few products in Pakistan's exports basket to Afghanistan where share declined in 2011 as compared to 2003 i.e. (i) HS-15: Animal, vegetable fats and oils, cleavage products, etc; (ii) HS-11: Milling products, malt, starches, inulin, wheat gluten; (iii) HS-46: Manufactures of plaiting material, basketwork, etc.; (iv) HS-25: Salt, sulphur, earth, stone, plaster, lime and cement; and (v) HS-31: Fertilizers. Pakistan's export to Afghanistan was merely 3.42 per cent in 2003 which went up to 10.50 per cent in 2011 and also registered growing trends during the period between 2003 and 2013.

The following commodities dominate in Pakistan's exports basket to Afghanistan: (i) Mineral Products (38.38 per cent); (ii) Vegetable Products (26.05 per cent); (iii) Animal or Vegetable Fats, Oils, and Waxes (7.16 per cent); (iv) Base Metals and Articles of Base Metal (6.39 per cent); (v) Prepared Foodstuffs, Beverages, and Tobacco (4.82 per cent); (vi) Plastics and Rubber, and Articles thereof (3.80 per cent); (vii) Live Animals; Animal Products (3.54 per cent); (viii) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (3.02 per cent); (ix) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment; Parts and Accessories of such Articles (2.04 per cent); and (x)

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Articles of Wood, Cork, or Plaiting Materials (1.66 per cent).

### **4.3. Indian Exports to the Central Asian Republics (CARs)**

This section examines the trade structure between India and Central Asian Republics (CARs viz. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Uzbekistan) over time and potential for further trade. The foreign trade of Central Asian Republics has registered growth during 2000 to 2013. India's exports to Central Asian countries were merely US\$ 74 million in 2000 which increased and reached upto US\$ 414 million in 2013. Among the Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan is dominating in India's exports to the region with highest export value (US\$ 236 million) followed by Uzbekistan (US\$ 87.82 million), Turkmenistan (US\$ 39.36 million), Kyrgyzstan (US\$ 29.5 million) and Tajikistan with lowest (US\$ 21.29) value in 2013. India generally maintains positive trade balance with these countries. As regards imports, Uzbekistan has been the largest source for India's imports from the region, followed by Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic.

The product wise composition of Indian exports to CARs in 2013 indicates that there has been significant rise in share of (i) HS-09: Coffee, tea, mate and spices; (ii) HS-30: Pharmaceutical products; (iii) HS-69: Ceramic products; (iv) HS-75 : Nickel and articles thereof; (v) HS-61: Articles of apparel, accessories, knit or crochet; (vi) HS-90: Clocks and watches and parts thereof; (vii) HS-21: Miscellaneous edible preparations; (viii) HS-02: Meat and edible meat offal; (ix) HS-68: Stone, plaster, cement, asbestos, mica, etc articles; and (x) HS-91: Musical instruments, parts and accessories during the period between 2000 and 2013. However, India's exports to the Central Asian region constitute less than one per cent of India's world exports during 2000 to 2013.

Product wise composition of Indian exports to Kazakhstan indicates significant rise in the share of (i) Vegetable Products (25.52 per cent); (ii) Textiles and Textile Articles (22.31 per cent); (iii) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (21.31 per cent); (iv) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment; Parts and Accessories of such Articles (17.48 per cent); (v) Articles of Stone or Ceramics; Glass and Glassware (2.99 per cent); (vi) Plastics and Rubber, and Articles thereof (2.70 per cent); (vii) Hides and Skins; Leather and Articles thereof; Travel Goods, Handbags, and Similar Containers (2.31 per cent); and (viii) Optical, Photographic, Measuring, and Medical Apparatus; Clocks and Watches; Musical Instruments (1.05 per cent);



India's exports to Kyrgyzstan dominated in (i) Textiles and Textile Articles (48.60 per cent); (ii) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (24.16 per cent); (iii) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment; Parts and Accessories of such Articles (8.15 per cent); (iv) Vegetable Products (6.62 per cent); (v) Live Animals; Animal Products (4.66 per cent); Prepared Foodstuffs, Beverages, and Tobacco (3.13 per cent); (vi) Hides and Skins; Leather and Articles thereof; Travel Goods, Handbags, and Similar Containers (1.91 per cent); and (vii) Optical, Photographic, Measuring, and Medical Apparatus; Clocks and Watches; Musical Instruments (1.06 per cent);

The share of Indian exports basket with Tajikistan is dominated in (i) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (42.90 per cent); (ii) Live Animals; Animal Products (23.47 per cent); (iii) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment; Parts and Accessories of such Articles (12.84 per cent); (iv) Textiles and Textile Articles (12.51 per cent); (v) Vegetable Products (2.05 per cent); (vi) Mineral Products (1.79 per cent); (vii) Articles of Stone or Ceramics; Glass and Glassware (1.71 per cent); and (viii) Optical, Photographic, Measuring, and Medical Apparatus; Clocks and Watches; Musical Instruments (1.10 per cent).

Major export products in Indian exports basket to Turkmenistan are (i) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment; Parts and Accessories of such Articles (32.77 per cent); (ii) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (29.36 per cent); (iii) Textiles and Textile Articles (9.01 per cent); (iv) Live Animals; Animal Products (7.20 per cent); (v) Mineral Products (6.10 per cent); (vi) Base Metals and Articles of Base Metal (4.52 per cent); (vii) Prepared Foodstuffs, Beverages, and Tobacco (4.43 per cent); (viii) Articles of Stone or Ceramics; Glass and Glassware (3.43 per cent); and (ix) Plastics and Rubber, and Articles thereof (1.52 per cent).

Major products in Indian exports basket with Uzbekistan dominate in (i) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (49.44 per cent); (ii) Optical, Photographic, Measuring, and Medical Apparatus; Clocks and Watches; Musical Instruments (11.21 per cent); (iii) Vehicles, Aircraft, and other Transport Equipment (9.65 per cent); (iv) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment; Parts and Accessories of such Articles (9.53 per cent); (v) Live Animals; Animal Products (5.32 per cent); (vi) Textiles and Textile Articles (4.39 per cent); (vii) Base Metals and Articles of Base Metal (3.96 per cent); (viii) Plastics and Rubber, and Articles thereof (1.55 per cent); (ix) Prepared Foodstuffs, Beverages, and Tobacco

(1.35 per cent); and (x) Vegetable Products (1.25 per cent).

#### **4.4. India's Potential of Exports to the Central Asian Republics (CARs)**

This section identifies the products in which India has potential of export to Central Asia. Based on India's exports capabilities and demand existing in the respective countries, the potential export items to Kazakhstan would include: machinery and transport equipment (harvesting / construction / food processing / telecommunication / data processing equipments and parts, passenger / public transport vehicles and parts); chemicals and related products; iron & steel products; ores and minerals; petroleum products; food products; tobacco; cement; aluminum; measuring instruments.

Potential items of exports to Turkmenistan would include machinery (piston engines and parts / harvesting, textile weaving / knitting machinery / air, vacuum pumps & compressors); transport equipment (passenger & public transport vehicles / semitrailer tractors); chemicals and related products; food products; iron and steel products.

In Tajikistan, food products (durum wheat / sugar, tea); chemicals and related products inorganic bases / fluorides / medicaments & antibiotics / soaps & detergents); machinery and transport equipment; iron and steel products; motor car tyres; cotton yarn and fabrics; cement; polished glass and glass articles present potential for exports.

Commodities having export potential in Kyrgyz Republic are chemicals & related products (inorganic acids / medicaments & antibiotics / soaps & detergents / polycarbonates); machinery & equipment (wheeled tractors / construction, mining, mineral working machinery); transport equipment (passenger / public transport vehicles and parts); textiles and garments; wheat; sugar & sugar confectionary; tea.

In Uzbekistan, potential items of exports would include machinery and equipments (agricultural, horticultural, harvesting machinery and parts / textile machinery / insulated wires & cables); transport equipment; iron and steel products; measuring / checking / precision instruments; organic & inorganic chemicals; pharmaceuticals; plastics and articles; tea; rice; sugar and sugar confectionary; ceramic products.

Now, we identify the sectors in which India has the potential to invest in Central Asia. In Kazakhstan, potential sectors for investment include oil & gas sector; power generation; telecommunication equipment; medical equipment & supplies; pollution control equipment; agricultural machinery; food processing & packaging; construction & engineering

services; mining. In Turkmenistan, sectors which present potential for investment would include oil and gas; electrical energy; chemical and mining; transportation and communications; environmental technology and services; healthcare and medical industry. In Tajikistan, sectors having investment potential are mining and related equipment, medical and pharmaceutical supplies, textile machinery, telecommunications, ecotourism, oil and gas extraction equipment; agribusiness and related sectors. In Kyrgyz Republic, agribusiness; mining sector; electricity generation; tourism; IT sector; and small and medium scale light manufacturing equipment are potential sectors. In Uzbekistan, potential sectors for investment include energy sector; IT sector; mining sector; food processing & packaging; textile machinery and equipment; and tourism infrastructure (Exim Bank Report, 2007).<sup>88</sup>

#### **4.5. Pakistan's Exports to Central Asian Republics (CARs)**

This section examines the trade potential of Pakistan with Central Asian Republic (CARs) during the period between 2003 and 2013. Pakistan and CARs have congruent interest in Afghanistan to restore peace in that country to foster trade and commercial relations with each other. CARs are also eager to achieve access to Arabian Sea through Pakistan. There is wide scope of cooperation between CARs and Pakistan in trade and commerce. But presently, the trade between Pakistan and Central Asian Republics is at low level as compared to India-Central Asia. Pakistan's exports to CARs was around US\$ 18 Million in 2003 which declined to only US\$ 9 million in 2009 and further started to fluctuate till 2013. The major areas of trade are textiles, garments, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, surgical instruments and agro industry and also focused on the instrument of barter trade.<sup>89</sup>

The product wise composition of Pakistan's exports to CARs indicates that there has been significant rise in share of these products (i) HS-30: Pharmaceutical products; (ii) HS-07: Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers; (iii) HS-08: Edible fruit, nuts, peel of citrus fruit, melons; (iv) HS-31: Fertilizers; (v) HS-85: Railway, tramway locomotives, rolling stock, equipment; (vi) HS-40: Rubber and articles thereof; and (vii) HS-56: Wadding, felt, nonwovens, yarns, twine, cordage. However, there are few product which also demonstrated declining trends which include (i) HS-36: Explosives, pyrotechnics, matches, pyrophorics; (ii) HS-49: Printed books, newspapers, pictures etc; and (iii) HS-21: Miscellaneous edible preparations. On the whole there is insignificant change in the exports of

Pakistan to Central Asia during the period between 2003 and 2013.

Product wise composition of Pakistani exports to Kazakhstan indicates that there has been significant rise in the share of (i) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (54.84 per cent); (ii) Vegetable Products (29.89 per cent); (iii) Optical, Photographic, Measuring, and Medical Apparatus; Clocks and Watches; Musical Instruments (4.66 per cent); (iv) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment; Parts and Accessories of such Articles (3.98 per cent); Textiles and Textile Articles ; (v) (1.75 per cent); Hides and Skins; Leather and Articles thereof; Travel Goods, Handbags, and Similar Containers (1.72 per cent); and (vi) Miscellaneous Manufactured Articles (1.47 per cent);

In the case of Kyrgyzstan, the product wise composition of Pakistani exports indicates significant rise in the share of (i) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (69.13 per cent); (ii) Textiles and Textile Articles (20.82 per cent); (iii) Miscellaneous Manufactured Articles (7.18 per cent); and (iv) Optical, Photographic, Measuring, and Medical Apparatus; Clocks and Watches; Musical Instruments (1.89 per cent);

The product wise composition of Pakistani exports to Tajikistan indicates significant rise in the share of (i) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (90.60 per cent); (ii) Textiles and Textile Articles (7.33 per cent); and (iii) Prepared Foodstuffs, Beverages, and Tobacco (1.42 per cent). Pakistan's export to Turkmenistan is dominating with significant rise in the share of (i) Vegetable Products (68.92 per cent); (ii) Products of the Chemical or Allied Industries (23.95 per cent); (iii) Prepared Foodstuffs, Beverages, and Tobacco (3.84); and Articles of Stone or Ceramics; Glass and Glassware (1.35 per cent). While Pakistan's exports to Uzbekistan is dominating in (i) Vegetable Products (11.33 per cent); (ii) Machinery and Mechanical Appliances; Electrical Equipment; Parts and Accessories of such Articles (4.61 per cent); (iii) Miscellaneous Manufactured Articles (4.43 per cent); (iv) Textiles and Textile Articles (4.15 per cent); and (v) Optical, Photographic, Measuring, and Medical Apparatus; Clocks and Watches; Musical Instruments (1.57 per cent).

#### **4.6. Pakistan's Potential of Exports to the Central Asian Republics (CARs)**

Pakistan is working to establish trade and investment linkages with the Central Asian Republics, including energy corridors (gas from Turkmenistan and electricity from Kyrgyzstan) within the context of the CAREC regional program sponsored by the Asian Development Bank.

When we see the potential of the Central Asian market for Pakistan on trade and investment, most of the imports by the Kyrgyz Republic are related to agricultural products. The major share of agriculture products in Kazakhstan, including fruits, vegetables and sea food are imported from Russia, Turkey and Europe. Pakistan has a competitive advantage and potential to export all these items as the timeframe for the transportation of these goods to these countries is significantly shorter. It takes only 13 hours for goods to be transported from Pakistan to the Kyrgyz Republic by way of the Karakoram Highway via China while the time frame for transporting goods between Pakistan and Kazakhstan through the Karakorum highway (Gilgit border) is approximately 16 hours.

Pakistan's exports to the Central Asian region are very low and major trading partner is Kazakhstan with US\$ 5.77 million followed by Uzbekistan (US\$ 3.51 million), Turkmenistan (US\$ 1.08 million) and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with less than US\$ 1 million in 2013. Pakistan's exports to Kazakhstan include leather, apparel, pharmaceutical products and surgical instruments. Imports by Pakistan total US\$1 million and includes inorganic chemicals and iron and steel.

Agreement on transit trade has opened broad prospects for exchange of trade and economic relations. Uzbekistan would consider entering into a tri-partite agreement with Pakistan via Afghanistan in order to gain access to the Pakistani ports at Karachi and Gwadar in order to increase volumes of bilateral trade. Pakistan and Uzbekistan in 2008 agreed to establish joint ventures in textile, pharmaceutical, leather industries, manufacturing medical equipment and exchange of technology in the health sector.<sup>90</sup> Pakistan offered to export engineering, medical and sports goods, textile fabrics, while Uzbek side proposed to export the cotton fiber, chemical products, silk, mineral fertilizers, cables, construction material, agriculture machinery.

#### **4.7. Comparison between Indian and Pakistan Exports to Afghanistan**

Though Pakistan is a major trading partner of Afghanistan, trading between Pakistan-Afghanistan is far lower as compared to India-Afghanistan trade during the period between 2003 and 2013. In order to examine the implications of providing access to India under new agreement, it is important to compare the share of major export items of Pakistan to Afghanistan with that of Indian exports of the same products to Afghanistan and Afghanistan's total imports of those products from

world.. The changes over the time are captured by taking three time periods 2000, 2005 and 2013.

The items such as dairy products, eggs, honey, edible animal products etc have significant share in Pakistan’s exports to Afghanistan. It is important to note that India’s export of these commodities has increased tremendously during the period under study. Similarly, with pharmaceutical products, articles of iron and steel, plastic, the share of Indian exports has increased over the time. It can be seen from Table 11 that there is clear indication of less tariff applied by Afghanistan on Indian products as compared to Pakistani products in selected four major products. Indian goods are substantially cheaper than Pakistan's and even with the added transportation cost and tariff, India will maintain a competitive advantage over similar Pakistani products.

TABLE 11: TARIFF APPLIED BY AFGHANISTAN ON INDIAN AND PAKISTAN PRODUCTS (%)

HS Code	Product Description	No of Tariff Lines	Tariff Applied by Afghanistan on Indian products (%)	Tariff Applied by Afghanistan on Pakistani products (%)
09	Coffee, tea, maté and spices	33	3.60	4.79
17	Sugars and sugar confectionery	16	2.63	3.94
25	Salt; sulphur; earths and stone; plastering materials, lime and cement	68	4.37	4.64
30	Pharmaceutical products	33	0.61	2.50

Source: MacMap Database

It can also be observed from Table 12 that Indian exports to Afghanistan have been steadily growing over the past decade. Pakistan’s exports on the other hand have shown a mixed trend, rising sharply during the period between the years 2000 and 2005 and then started declining and registered fluctuating trends upto 2013

At present there is quite a significant product overlap between Indian and Pakistani exports to Afghanistan which include : HS-30: Pharmaceutical products; HS-85: Railway, tramway locomotives, rolling stock, equipment; HS-40: Rubber and articles thereof; HS-04: Dairy products, eggs, honey, edible animal products; HS-62: Articles of apparel, accessories, not knit or crochet; HS-09: Coffee, tea, maté and

spices; HS-61: Articles of apparel, accessories, knit or crochet; HS-84: Electrical, electronic equipment; HS-73: Articles of iron or steel; HS-87 : Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling stock, and parts and accessories thereof; HS-52: Cotton; HS-71: Pearls, precious stones, metals, coins, etc; HS-76: Aluminium and articles thereof; HS-33: Essential oils, perfumes, cosmetics, toiletries; HS-72: Iron and steel; HS-63: Other made textile articles, sets, worn clothing etc; HS-49: Printed books, newspapers, pictures etc; HS-39: Plastics and articles thereof; HS-90: Clocks and watches and parts thereof; HS-17: Sugars and sugar confectionery; HS-82: Miscellaneous articles of base metal; HS-29: Organic chemicals; HS-02: Meat and edible meat offal; HS-96: Works of art, collectors pieces and antiques; HS-21: Miscellaneous edible preparations; HS-74: Copper and articles thereof; HS-27: Mineral fuels, oils, distillation products, etc; HS-38: Miscellaneous chemical products; HS-20: Vegetable, fruit, nut, etc food preparations; HS-34: Soaps, lubricants, waxes, candles, modelling pastes; HS-28: Inorganic chemicals, precious metal compound, isotopes; HS-48: Paper & paperboard, articles of pulp, paper and board; HS-83: Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery, etc; HS-94: Toys, games, sports requisites; HS-68: Stone, plaster, cement, asbestos, mica, etc articles; HS-70: Glass and glassware; HS-57: Carpets and other textile floor coverings; HS-32: Tanning, dyeing extracts, tannins, derivs, pigments etc; HS-44: Wood and articles of wood, wood charcoal; HS-56: Wadding, felt, nonwovens, yarns, twine, cordage, etc; and HS-15: Animal, vegetable fats and oils, cleavage products, etc. India has a much bigger economy with a larger agricultural base than Pakistan. India's overall exports of those products to the world are indicative of its export potential.

There are few products in which Pakistan has no competition or exclusively dominates as compared to India in exports to Afghanistan which include HS-01: Live animals; HS-07: Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers; HS-08: Edible fruit, nuts, peel of citrus fruit, melons; HS-10: Cereals; HS-11: Milling products, malt, starches, inulin, wheat gluten; HS-15: Animal, vegetable fats and oils, cleavage products, etc; HS-17: Sugars and sugar confectionery; HS-19: Cereal, flour, starch, milk preparations and products; HS-20: Vegetable, fruit, nut, etc food preparations; HS-21: Miscellaneous edible preparations; HS-22: Beverages, spirits and vinegar; HS-23: Residues, wastes of food industry, animal fodder; HS-25: Salt, sulphur, earth, stone, plaster, lime and cement; HS-27: Mineral fuels, oils, distillation products, etc; HS-32: Tanning, dyeing extracts, tannins, derivs, pigments etc; HS-34: Soaps, lubricants, waxes,

TABLE 12: COMPARISON BETWEEN INDIAN AND PAKISTAN EXPORTS TO AFGHANISTAN : HS-2 DIGIT COMMODITY (US\$ '000)

	<i>India's Export to Afghanistan</i>			<i>Pakistan's Exports to Afghanistan</i>		
	2000	2005	2013	2000	2005	2013
87 : Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling stock	378	7323	3849	4813	8976	13565
87: Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof			6144		36	
85: Railway, tramway locomotives, rolling stock, equipment	42	4680	33037	3835	7995	23463
Mineral fuels, oils, distillation products, etc		283	513	82471	253577	394490
84: Electrical, electronic equipment	1155	10207	9876	7321	14222	38095
11: Milling products, malt, starches, inulin, wheat gluten				46468	101496	3261
10: Cereals		33	0	34495	37523	148572
90: Clocks and watches and parts thereof	81	1774	1337	225	1041	517
54: Manmade filaments	177	17144	200215	45	2470	0
73: Articles of iron or steel	395	2683	9244	19435	62497	85144
30: Pharmaceutical products	1159	28671	51283	2440	7675	59054
25: Salt, sulphur, earth, stone, plaster, lime and cement	285	6	69	20124	84252	149397
40: Rubber and articles thereof	7386	12679	26778	661	825	1641
39: Plastics and articles thereof	33	751	1461	12580	104004	69222



15: Animal,vegetable fats and oils, cleavage products, etc		0	76	43699	96828	93913
09: Coffee, tea, mate and spices	399	1907	15197	42	70	2246
24: Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes	2583	3437	15179	144	235	2
72: Iron and steel	356	1214	2144	3799	6599	4174
44: Wood and articles of wood, wood charcoal		137	109	4262	9428	19974
94: Toys, games, sports requisites	82	1120	167	1273	2594	2215
04: Dairy products, eggs, honey, edible animal product nes		1866	20700	6763	16909	38998
21: Miscellaneous edible preparations	394	711	713	961	1185	4353
02: Meat and edible meat offal	63	4141	1056	225	8	1495
17: Sugars and sugar confectionery	7	97	1253	14769	38435	18302
63: Other made textile articles, sets, worn clothing etc	316	3781	1869	3327	4626	4878
Total (all commodity)	23311	147923	471600	408203	1064748	1373863

Source: MACMAP online database, Oct 2014.

candles, modelling pastes; HS-36: Explosives, pyrotechnics, matches, pyrophorics, etc; HS-39: Plastics and articles thereof; HS-44: Wood and articles of wood, wood charcoal; HS-48: Paper & paperboard, articles of pulp, paper and board; HS-64: Footwear, gaiters and the like, parts thereof; HS-68: Stone, plaster, cement, asbestos, mica, etc articles; HS-69: Ceramic products; HS-70: Glass and glassware; HS-94: Toys, games, sports requisites; and HS-96: Works of art, collectors pieces and antiques.

Afghanistan is a land locked country and depends on other countries for its trade. It has signed bilateral trade and transit agreements with Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan,<sup>91</sup> Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, India, China, EU, US and others. Pakistan has so far signed the following transit trade agreements to facilitate transit transport to the neighbouring countries as well as to the CARs: (i) Transit Trade Agreement between Iran and Pakistan, 1975; (ii) Traffic in Transit Agreement between China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan, 1995; (iii) Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA), 1998; and (iv) Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), 2010.

##### 5. SIGNIFICANCE OF APTTA FO AFGHANISTAN, SOURTH ASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

According to a number of experts and international organizations, the successful implementation of the APTTA is crucial for Afghanistan for a number of reasons. At least half of Afghanistan's exports went either to or through Pakistan in 2010.<sup>92</sup> In addition, the volume of Afghan exports to India is high and is likely to increase substantially in the coming years, as suggested by the Indo-Afghan strategic agreement.<sup>93</sup> Between 2009 and 2010, for instance, the proportion of Afghan exports destined for India increased by 35.6 per cent. However, in order to sustain such growth, trans-Pakistan trucking must be predicible, relatively cheap and fast, according to a 2009 report on "Trade Promotion in Afghanistan". Air freight may allow some high-value Afghan exports to bypass Pakistan and other neighbouring countries, but, as a report on "Market Prospects" in Afghanistan suggests, shipping agricultural goods via plane is not commercially viable given the prohibitive high costs involved.

Smooth and predictable exports and imports via Pakistan appear to be important for Afghanistan's most promising and strategic industries: mining and agriculture. The US and Afghan governments have made

concerted efforts to promote Afghanistan's mining sector, which *The Guardian* says could be decisive in moving the country out of poverty. One study of economic growth in Afghanistan, entitled *Afghanistan and the Search for a Sustainable Economy* (2010), indicates that the mining sector could provide from US\$ 300 to US\$ 730 million per year during initial exploration and development of mining infrastructure; subsequently the Afghan government could receive up to US\$ 1 billion in income annually. Former US Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad wrote in *Foreign Policy* in October 2011 that "[a]s foreign aid dries up, Afghanistan will become increasingly dependent on mineral and energy development contracts to finance its reconstruction efforts and sustain its security forces."<sup>94</sup> Extraction would also produce a massive potential for employment which could stabilise Afghanistan, according to the World Bank. China first won the rights to the Aynak copper deposit in central Afghanistan in 2007, and a range of companies, primarily from India, are in the final bidding stages for the Hajigak iron ore deposit, according to the *Indian Express* newspaper. However, actual ore extraction has not yet begun on a large scale in Afghanistan, and growth in this sector could be jeopardised if mining firms face difficulties importing equipment into Afghanistan and, above all, in exporting the ore.

The ability to export goods in a timely and predictable manner is particularly crucial for agricultural products given their perishability. International emphasis has now been placed on enhancing the production, marketing and export of high-value agricultural products from Afghanistan, thus making this sector poised for growth in the short-to-mid-term. For instance, Micro Soft and the National Broadcasting Company known as MSNBC (based in USA) notes that international and Afghan agency have promoted crops such as pomegranates and saffron as alternatives to poppies and as sources of future economic growth. The importance of Afghan agricultural exports to India – and other foreign nations – can be seen in the October 2011 establishment of the India Fresh Fruit Trade Office in Afghanistan, which was highlighted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).<sup>95</sup> This office builds upon large-scale purchases of Afghan fruits by Indian wholesalers in 2010.

Pakistan is Afghanistan's largest exporting partner since 2000, while India was largest exporting country for Afghanistan in the years 1980, 1990, 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2013. But according to the data published by the EC revealed that Pakistan is presently Afghanistan's largest trading partner both in terms of imports and exports in the world.<sup>96</sup> Moreover,

trade statistics from the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) indicate that Pakistan has been Afghanistan's largest trade partner throughout the past decade and there has been a steady increase in Afghanistan's exports to and imports from Pakistan.

In 2013, Afghanistan's major exports destination countries are Pakistan (US\$ 108.5 million), India (US\$ 109.7 million), USA (US\$ 113 million), Tajikistan (US\$ 40.2 million) and Russia Federation (US\$ 13.1 million). Afghanistan's major import country is USA with (US\$ 1663 million), followed by Pakistan (US\$ 1493 million), India (US\$ 516 million), Russia (US\$ 285 million), Turkmenistan (US\$ 186 million), Kazakhstan (US\$ 166 million) and China (US\$ 234 million).

The World Bank indicates that Afghanistan is largely dependent on other countries for imports and exports given that it is land-locked and hence reliant on trade with or through its neighbours.<sup>97</sup> At the same time, Pakistan must send goods via Afghanistan en-route to markets in Central Asia. Given their economic interdependence, the two countries in 2010 signed the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), which also increases the number of ports, carriers and border crossing points accessible to business people in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It also provides a land route for Afghan exports to India as well as a route for Pakistani exports to the Central Asian Republics. The implementation of this agreement and the potential for Afghanistan to export goods, particularly agricultural products and mineral resources, to India and beyond could serve as a major economic boon for the Afghan economy as international financing is expected to decline in the coming years.<sup>98</sup>

The immediate task before Afghanistan and Pakistan is to implement the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement, engaging as necessary the assistance of appropriate national and international partners as, for example, the United Nations' Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. This agreement, reached with active U.S. encouragement and signed in 2010, will enable trucks of both countries to deliver goods to the other, greatly boosting exports and trade. To date, however, APPTA has not been implemented. The U.S. must exercise leadership to ensure its immediate implementation.<sup>99</sup> For Afghanistan, among the main benefits is improved access to overseas markets through Pakistan's ports Karachi, Qasim, and Gwadar and for Pakistan, it is particularly important to obtain better access to Central Asian markets. The access to the Central Asian republics will increase the volume of exports to these countries by US\$ 1 billion.

Afghanistan has become a bridge to give Pakistani traders entry into

the Central Asian Republics; as Pakistan is now allowing Afghan trucks to export goods to the India-Pakistan Wagah border under the revised Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA). It is also advocated by Presidents of both countries that this treaty would augur well for the Pak-Afghan trade relations and bilateral trade would touch US\$ 5 billion by 2015.<sup>100</sup> Under the new accord, the government of Pakistan will not permit Afghan importers to use comparatively cheaper land route of the Wagah border for importing Indian goods, in a bid to restrict Indian goods. Expansion in legal trade will certainly generate revenue for the cash-strapped Pakistan and above all solidify economic ties between the three important members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

At present, India-Pakistan trade can take place either through Atari (by rail) or Wagah (by road) or Mumbai-Karachi sea route. Trucks carrying goods are not permitted to cross over one side to another, adding to the cost of cargo loading/unloading, damage and delays. Again, moving goods from Delhi to Mumbai by rail and then to Karachi by sea route costs almost three times that of moving them directly from Delhi to Atari by rail route. Providing access of APTTA to India can help India-Pakistan trade to realise its true potential, which is several times higher than the current US\$ 2.6 billion. Due to the transit trade problems, intra-SAARC trade is not increasing substantially.

While goods from Afghanistan may come to India via Pakistan (through land route) but Indian goods are not allowed into Afghanistan via Pakistan. Similarly, Pakistani goods are not allowed to go to Bangladesh or Nepal via India. Only Nepal and Bhutan have got transit facilities from India for their trade with Bangladesh. Intra-SAARC trade can easily multiply if seamless movement of goods and services across the region is ensured. Restriction on transit movement of merchandise further adds to the transaction cost. Further, complex rules of origin make it difficult to benefit from SAFTA duty preference. Many a time, exporters, especially SMEs, forego preferential duty access because of the difficulties associated with compliance in terms of time and cost.

APTTA clearly states that no Indian export to Afghanistan will be allowed through Wagah. However, Afghanistan would have the opportunity to export to India. Reciprocally, Pakistan would be able to export its goods to Central Asia through Afghanistan. If APTTA provides or extends access to India, India can freely conduct trading business with Central Asia through APTTA transit trade routes. India's export to Central

Asian was merely US\$ 414 million and Pakistan's export to Central Asia was even far below roughly around US\$ 12 million in 2011. It can easily be doubled, if APTTA provides access to India for trading to Central Asian countries via Afghanistan. The emergence of Central Asian republics has facilitated Pakistan to secure its rights to use Afghanistan transit facilities for trade with Central Asia and provide transit facilities to landlocked Central Asian republics. Under the new Agreement, Afghanistan has offered 17 transit routes to Pakistan to export goods to Central Asian Republics (CARs). Afghanistan also hopes its strategic location will make it a regional transit hub for trade with Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and China, if the country becomes politically stable.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), signed in October 2010, replaced the previous agreement between the two countries dating from 1965. The first APTTA was designed to guarantee the freedom of transit for both countries within one another's territories. That was particularly beneficial to Afghanistan. While Afghanistan is a landlocked country, the agreement enabled it to conduct maritime trade via Pakistan's seaports.

APTTA was signed on 28 October 2010 between the two countries and subsequently ratified by the cabinet in its meeting on December 1, 2010. The Instruments of Ratification has been signed by the President of Pakistan.

The APTTA was reached after years of negotiations, active U.S. encouragement and promises of billions of dollars of aid to Pakistan. The major difference between the old ATTA and the APTTA is that under the new agreement, Afghan exporters will be allowed to use their own trucks to carry exports to Pakistani sea ports and to the Wagah border. To the benefit of Pakistan, there are also many provisions to tackle the issue of unauthorized trade and smuggling of goods into Pakistan. The agreement has the potential to boost Afghanistan's development and regional trade. While it excludes Indian exports across Pakistan, over time it may create insurmountable pressure within Pakistan and Afghanistan to open up trade across the border with India, thus providing a substantial stepping stone in the integration of South and Central Asian economies.

It has also been reported that as a reciprocal gesture, Pakistan will be able to export its goods to Central Asia through Afghanistan. Although

this clause is not part of the record note, Afghanistan does allow transit of Pakistani goods to Central Asia even without a formal agreement. At the moment, Pakistan's exports to Central Asia are quite insignificant though it registered increasing trends. Still, this provision will have positive implications for Pakistan's economy in the long run. Within this broader framework, this is an important start for linking the South and Central Asian economies. In this way, Afghanistan's policy of promoting the country as a "land bridge" between different regions may become a reality in near future.

This study clearly advocates that at present Pakistan enjoys a better market share in Afghanistan as compared to India and other countries in the world. But there are few products in which Pakistan has to face stiff competition in its exports to Afghanistan with India as both these countries are competing each other and many products are overlapping in their exports basket. However, Pakistan has an edge over India in exporting to Afghanistan due to direct road transport connectivity. The huge construction market in Afghanistan, on the other hand, offers immediate opportunities to India for enhancing its share in goods and services exports in the region.

Afghanistan forms a land bridge between South and Central Asia and by virtue of its location it could emerge as a trade hub connecting its neighbors to the east with markets in the Middle East, Central Asia and Europe. Before that happens, much has to be done to upgrade inadequate physical infrastructure such as roads, ports, and border crossings. The immediate task before the Government of Afghanistan and Pakistan is to extend APTTA to Central Asia and India if they are really interested to reap the benefit of transit trade for their economic sustainability in coming years. If, the more comprehensive APPTA model proves politically untenable or administratively burdensome, consider the less ambitious approach step by step adopted in the current Cross-Border Transport Agreement between Afghanistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan.

To ensure the effectiveness and proper implementation of the APTTA, Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Coordination Authority (APTTCA) should work efficiently to ensure the mediation and solution of any possible conflicts between stakeholders of Afghanistan and Pakistan through Arbitration tribunals

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# ETHNICITY, RELIGION AND NATIONALISM IN AFGHANISTAN

MANSOOR EHSAN

## INTRODUCTION

Ethnically and religiously conservative country will always have difficulty in establishing democratic institutions. While the dominant ethnic and religious aspects suffuse the civic criteria in multi-ethnic and religious states, it can easily contribute to significant internal conflict.<sup>1</sup> The horrible genocides perpetrated on Iraqi Shi'as and Kurds by the Ba'thist regime in Iraq, the massacres of Shi'as and Tajiks by the Taliban in Afghanistan,<sup>2</sup> the Bosnian civil war and the civil war in Tajikistan stand as reminders of how post-colonial imagination of nation can turn, just as some European nationalism, had toward dark imagination of ethnic hegemony and even homogenization.<sup>3</sup> However, as a sociologist Avijit Pathak argues that "no means suggest that our shared humanity is a 'homogenous whole' without inner variations and differences. Meaningful unity, it has to be realized, emerges out of differences. Unity is by no mean Uniformity".<sup>4</sup>

Afghanistan is one of the countries with a complex ethnic set up in the world. The country since its establishment as a political entity has witnessed periods of violent turbulence. According to Mountstuart Elphinstone any observer of Afghanistan would be surprised and may find it difficult to comprehend how a nation could subsist in such disorder; the changing combination of forces is not based on any principle; but they simply represent the unfolding of old rivalries and new clashes of interests.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the continuous patrimonial and tribal practices of power over 230 years, which goes back to Ahmad Shah Abdali, the founder of Afghan state in 1747 AD, whose power was fundamentally personal and

independent of any objectively rational goal. However, finally in 1980s the tribal based regime promoted the Marxist political ideology as a means of creating a civic nation state and greater loyalty to the state. The opposition to the state comes primarily from the tribes and ethnic groups, as well as the urban middle classes, for whom an Islamic identity has served as a rallying point capable of unifying antagonistic ethnic communities and other groupings.<sup>6</sup> Although, in case of Afghanistan the feeling of ethnic attachment is stronger than in Pakistan, its national identity is congealed around religion, and Islam is considered as the base for legitimization of the state identity.<sup>7</sup> But such competing claims of ethnicity, religion and its uses of each by political elites have had deep repercussion on the nation building process in Afghanistan and foreign relations.

The present article “Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism in Afghanistan” is basically an endeavor to explain the roots of ethnic and religious rivalries and conflicts in Afghanistan. Certainly, these ethnic and religious extreme attachments sometimes get so violent that even archaeological objects and historical monuments are targetted, as a mean of eradication of the historical background and identity of other ethnic groups in Afghanistan. The destruction of Buddha’s of Bamiyan and hundreds of other archaeological objects at the Kabul museum and all around the country, as well as the changing of areas, institutions, academic and military titles as a mean of homogenization is a visible example of ethnonationalistic tendencies in Afghanistan. It also explains as to how the ‘ethnonationalist’ and ‘theonationalist’ tendencies of Afghan leaders challenge the process of ‘nation building’ and democratization in Afghanistan. The article is divided into three main sections. The first section elucidates the terms and concepts of nationalism, and the many controversial and polemical debates on the subject; such as: ethnonationalism, theonationalism, civic or democratic nationalisms, and nation state. The second part focuses on Afghan/Pashtun nationalism, its implication, and contradiction with the real essence of democratic and civic nationalism. The third section examines the obstacles, which lie on the way of civic and democratic nation building in contemporary Afghanistan.

#### NATION STATE, ETHNONATIONALISM & THEONATIONALISM PARADOX

Political identity is not a new thing in history, but the appearance of the

nation-state has new features that differ from religious, ethnic or imperial territorial identification. Nations are wholly modern, modern in the sense of being recent; and the components of the nation have been novel and have emerged through the process of modernization, the rise of modern conditions and modernizing policies. Nonetheless, the issue of modernity or antiquity of nation has become central to the study of nationalism over the last few decades.

The rise of ethnic nationalism in many parts of the world has only posed more acute questions about the origin, nature and consequences of nationalism. Of course, there have been a number of studies of these phenomena in the 1950s and 1960s, the era of decolonization in Africa and Asia. But, during 1980s, scholarly attention was attached to other kinds of ideology and social movements, and in particular the varieties of Marxism and communism. The nation received little attention apart from its combination with the state in the 'nation-state'; nationalism attracted much less interest with 'class', 'race' or 'gender'.<sup>8</sup> However, during the last twenty five years there has been a phenomenal growth in the practice and study of nationalism, since disintegration of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Ethiopia.

Nationalism was an inclusive and liberating force. It broke down the localism of religion, ethnicity, language, custom and clan, and helped to create large and powerful nation-states. Hence, the essence of 'nation-state' was civic and democratic. It challenged the feudal practices and oppressive imperial tyrannies and proclaimed the sovereignty of the people and the right of all peoples to determine their own destinies, in states of their own. However, the large scale mass democratic nationalisms of the earlier nineteenth century were later joined by a host of small scale mini nationalisms led by intellectuals who appealed to ethnicity, religion and cultural differences. As a consequence, once again, nationalisms have been shadowed by race, ethnicity, religion leading to violence and brutality and cradle of fascism.<sup>9</sup>

Basically, there are two main types or ideal forms of nationalism in Weberian thought. The first is the revolutionary-democratic or 'civic' conception of nationhood that is not tied to ethnic and religious identity.<sup>10</sup>

Civic-nationalism refers to the assertion of a population's collective identity and of its right to political, territorial sovereignty based on its adherence to a common set of political values and on its allegiance to an existing or prospective, territorially defined state. In principle, civic nationalism is inclusive of all who choose to participate in common political culture, regardless of their ethnicity,

race, religion and mother tongue.<sup>11</sup>

The second type of nationalism which is a particularistic form, is mainly linked in the minds of its proponents to race, ethnicity and language, which is recognized as Ethnic Nationalism.<sup>12</sup> "Ethnic Nationalism denotes the assertion of a collective identity centered around a myth of common biological descent, an extension of the kinship principle to a large population and as its corollary, a claim to territorial sovereignty."<sup>13</sup>

The term 'Ethnic-nationalism' can also refer to any movement that focuses on common, objective cultural characteristics, such as linguistic, religious and folkloric as the foundation of political nationhood. Ethnic-nationalism fascinated with the idea of the nation's organic unity, rooted in common ancestry and/or expressed in specific cultural forms is seen as conducive to intolerant, chauvinistic, and authoritarian forms of government.<sup>14</sup>

Language, like religion and ethnicity, can also form a basis for particularistic nationalism. But creation of a nation-state based on language, ethnicity, religion is blemished practically. Both English and Arabic serve as the languages of a number of nation states, and yet, as with the 'English only' movement in California or the imposition of Arabic on Iraqi Kurdistan, a non-Arabic speaking area, language could infuse with nationalist and particularistic meaning.

Besides, making the religion as the base of nationalism can provoke apparent contradictions. The argument that religions are universal and so excluded from playing such a specific role is deeply flawed. What does one make of co-religionists outside the nation state that is founded on religion? These contradictions, however, do not stand in the way of the implementation of religion based nationalisms, as witnessed in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. In each of these countries religious identity plays a central part in the national identity, alongside ethnic, linguistic, and other factors.<sup>15</sup> Anthony D. Smith believes, that "nationalism, in West's understanding, is not the exclusive property of the ancients, nor is heroic self-sacrifice for one's country. It is as much a phenomenon of the modern world as of the ancient."<sup>16</sup>

Nations were essentially territorial political communities. They were sovereign, limited and cohesive communities of legally equal citizens, and they were conjoined with modern states to form what we call unitary 'nation-states'. Hereby, nations constituted primarily their defined political boundaries and loyalty of their members; any ties of ethnicity, race, religion, family, gender had to be subordinated to citizenship of 'nation-state'.



Nations were the sole framework for social and political commitment and development; the only instrument for assuring the needs of all citizens in the production and distribution of resources and the only means of assuring sustainable development. This was because only national loyalty and nationalist ideology could mobilize the masses for the commitment, dedication and self-sacrifice required by modernization with all its strains and dislocations.<sup>17</sup>

#### AFGHAN/PASHTUN NATIONALISM

Whenever we speak of nationalism in Afghanistan, we mean 'Pashtun Nationalism' rather than 'Afghan nationalism'. Though, the name Afghan has come to mean all those who live in Afghanistan; however, 'Afghan' is in fact a Persianized version of 'Pashtun'.<sup>18</sup> The words 'Afghan' and 'Pashtun' are interchangeable. Pashtun nationalism is connected with *Pashtunwali*,<sup>19</sup> *Qawmwali* (tribal ways/rivalry) and *Terborwali* (cousin rivalry). Afghan/Pashtun writers and poets use nationalism to mean adulation of one's territory; hence, uprising against invading forces and dominant empire are all seen by 'Pashtun' writers as aspects of nationalism, drawing on the Pashtun ethnically superior identity and experience in fighting for the purpose of defending national honour.<sup>20</sup> For instance, Khushal Khan Khattak,<sup>21</sup> through his poetry has come to be regarded as an icon of Pashtun nationalism. According to Khatak, Afghan means Pashtuns/Pathans. In one of many of his nationalistic couplets he says:

Pashtuns, in matters of honor and shame are one from Amu to Attak.

In other famous couplet he says:

I raise my sword for the honour of Afghan.  
I am the proudest of time Khushal Khattak.

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Black is the Mughal's heart towards all us Pathans  
Well am I acquainted with each one of their designs.<sup>22</sup>

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I am tribal and am lost in the unity of nation  
To elevate the name of Afghans  
I love these young people who put the halter on stars  
This son of mountains is never less than the Mughals

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More skilled in the swords are the Pashtuns than the Mughals  
Would only more intelligence was theirs  
Were the tribes but of agreement amongst themselves

Emperors would prefer to bow before them  
Every deed of the Pashtun is better than that of the Mughal  
Concord is what they lack, how pitiful that is<sup>23</sup>

Pashtuns today consider themselves a Semitic race whose ancestors were companions to the Prophet Mohammad,<sup>24</sup> Thus, they are trying to justify their ethnic holiness through religion. Pashtuns / Afghans have a strong sense of ethnic and religious dependency; these extreme attachments have been fuelling the Pashtun / Afghan sense of nationalism.

Benedict Anderson in his book, *Imagined Community: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* writes: " It is imagined because the member of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion". Hence borrowing from Anderson's definition,<sup>25</sup> it can also be said that a Pashtun will never meet, or even know the names of more than a handful of his fellow Pashtuns. He has no idea of what they are up to at any one time. But he has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity.

Afghan/Pashtun nationalism emerged out of the aspiration based on tribal factors, with the aim of achieving statehood. The state and nation were seen as the only source of achieving political power. The Pashtuns ruled government in Afghanistan has always presented a biased and imaginary estimation of the Pashtun population for justifying themselves as a majority, though, no objective census through a scientific method took place since the emergence of Afghanistan as a political entity. However, in a civic and democratic nation state, the criteria of ethnic and religious majority and minority is not a matter of consideration. However, what is more important is the citizenship of the individuals. Since, 'nation state' is defined as a modern phenomenon which separates the older agrarian societies and modern industrial societies. But in case of Afghanistan, it remained mostly tribal and was minimally affected by modern democratic and civil processes. Thus, the view of 'nation-state' has little bearing on the Afghan tribal, religious and ethnically conscious nationalist movements of the centuries since 1747 till now.

#### AFGHANISTAN AND NATION BUILDING ENDEAVOR

In 1747 all the Pashtun tribes held a nine days *Loya Jirga* in Kandahar, and as a consequence, Ahmad Shah Abdali was chosen as a king. Ahmad Shah, who changed his last name and that of his dynasty to Durrani,

became the father of the Afghan nation. Durrani moved the capital from Kandahar to Kabul in 1772 and conquered northern Afghanistan, incorporating other ethnic groups into the 'Afghan-nation'. In spite of all domestic rivalries between the 'Ghilzai Pashtuns' and 'Durrani Pashtuns' and on the other hand, between Pashtun and non-Pashtun ethnic groups, the country has survived for centuries and has managed to retain some form of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

During 19<sup>th</sup> century, British-India tried to conquer Afghanistan three times but failed every time. Hence, British-India decided to turn Afghanistan into a client state rather than have it as its imperial domain. On the other side, Tsarist Russia conquered Central Asia and encroached into northern Afghanistan, buying support in a bid to undermine British-India. Both empires competed for influence in Kabul and launched a secret war of wits, bribery, and secret agents dubbed.<sup>26</sup> but at the end of nineteenth century, the two empires agreed to demarcate Afghanistan's borders, in the north with Russia, in the east with India, and in the west with Persia.<sup>27</sup> The English forced Afghanistan to accept the Treaty of 'Gandamak' in May 1879, and the frontier formed by the 'Durand line'<sup>28</sup> in 1893. The Russians dictated the settlement of 1888 'Amu Darya' and that of 1895 'Pamir'; both were later underpinned by the St Petersburg Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907.<sup>29</sup>

The defined frontiers were purely strategic and divided the tribes and ethnic groups into several states and did not correspond to any ethnic or historical aspects. Certainly, this is the scene behind the creation of Afghanistan as so called 'nation-state' from a buffer land. King Abdul Rahman (1880 – 1901), who received British subsidies to establish the first standing army and bureaucracy in Afghanistan,<sup>30</sup> used brutal methods for suppressing the other ethnic groups, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks, ending their autonomy and bringing them under the control of Kabul. He shifted thousands of Pashtuns, including his major enemies from Ghilzai tribe from the south-central Afghanistan to the north of Hindu Kush,<sup>31</sup> not only to respond to his immediate aim, due to his rivalries with Ghilzai Pashtuns, but also to dilute the non-Pashtun ethnicity, and vastly conquer their land and properties. Undoubtedly, Abdul Rahman's suppressive policies regarding other ethnic groups have been followed by his descendent Habibullah, Amanullah, Nadir Shah and Zahir Shah.<sup>32</sup>

The American geographer Prof. Niger Allen says: "Afghanistan became a state, but in reality a space between Russian Central Asia and the British". Bringing diverse ethnic groups together and homogenization

tendencies for the formation of a nation state was a challenge, as it continues to be today.<sup>33</sup> Certainly, there were two possible interpretations about the essence of Afghan state:

- Territorial and dynastic view which identified Afghanistan with the area ruled by Abdul Rahman, thus a reference to the tribal origin.
- Religious perspective which identified the country with the area which had remained Muslim, surrounded as it was by the kingdoms of the infidels — Britain and Russia, or the heretic shias / Persians; this was the *Millat* (the geographical sub-region of the *Umma*) in the sense given the term in Ottoman law, that is to say a religious community. The Amir legitimized the authority of the state by arousing the people in defense of the 'Muslim-Millat' being threatened by the infidels.<sup>34</sup>

Since 1924 onwards, the recognition of Afghanistan by the European nations on the idea of nationalism which would be purely Afghan has been extremely shaped. The constitution of 1923 defined Afghanistan as a nation state in which every resident had the right of citizenship, whatever his religion is, since no reference was made to the 'Muslim Millat'.<sup>35</sup> The invention of folklore comprising a number of incongruous elements, such as the national sport was supposedly a Turkish game known as *Bozkashi*; the provincial dance from Paktia which is called *Atan* has been introduced as national dance. Certainly, the factor of 'ethno-symbolism' got more attention among the state rulers, who stressed on the importance of symbols, such as, myths, logos and traditions. Hence, superimposing Ernest Gellner's definition of nationalism<sup>36</sup> on the present case study, one can say that Afghan nation building process has been masqueraded under the false presence; an assimilate invention by fabrication and falsity, rather than by imagining and creation.

Oliver Roy believes, that, Afghanistan always oscillated between the concepts of an abstract nation, defined on the basis of its own sovereignty, and the historical reference to a Pashtun nation defined as an ethnic group which did not achieve its nationhood, nevertheless, the only possible outcome for the other ethnic groups was to become Pashtun. However, both these definitions had no implications for any of the groups within the nation. The second worked to the advantage of those Pashtuns who were not Durrani and therefore did not belong to the tribal aristocracy. They founded Pashtun nationalism as an ideology which gave them an

opportunity to improve their social and political means, and wresting the monopoly of power. This group gained recruits especially amongst the young educated elite, particularly those who came from Ghilzay. It was amongst them that the Khalq tendency of the communist party took root, which was the phase of an extreme Pashtun nationalism.<sup>37</sup>

On the one hand, the Afghan/Pashtun leaders tried to imitate the western political prototypes and aspired to lead the country on the road to modernization. But on the other hand, they have used the nation state as an instrument for cultivating and improving their own ethnic culture, language and symbols; changing the military titles<sup>38</sup> and names of the regions and districts<sup>39</sup> from Farsi and Turkish into Pashtu language could be considered as visible example. How to reconcile these apparent contradictions between the Pashtun ethnic domination and the democratic-civil criteria has been an ongoing problem since the beginning of claim for nation building in Afghanistan.

The Pashtun political elites have tried to co-opt nationalist themes and symbols in order to present an image of unity to the outside world and legitimize their own continued hold on power. While, other ethnic groups find themselves unexpectedly marginalized communities and have felt a systematic suppression by the Pashtun leaders regarding their genuine heritage, myths, culture, language and land, besides the discriminating deprivation from power and wealth. The continuation of discriminating policies based on ethnicity, religion and language created wall of pessimism and despise among other ethnic groups, which burst during 1990s.

From Gellner's point of view as an anthropologist, pre-modern societies are based on kinship ties of patronage; so according to him, strong clan-based systems are the sign of pre-modern societies, where the nation state could not replace kinship as a focus of loyalty.<sup>40</sup> Afghanistan is one such country with continued salience of both religion and ethnicity in the contemporary world, in general and in the developing polities in particular.

Afghan/Pashun ethno-nationalist tendencies were not limited to Afghanistan from within, but it impacted deeply its foreign policy. Such as, Afghan government launched a radical reform, dedicated to the goal of promoting Pashtunism as the foundation for an Afghan nationalism with ability to determine the fate of the Pashtuns on the Pakistani side of the border.<sup>41</sup> As a result of a strong sense of Pashtun chauvinism and financial support and sympathy of Pashtun leaders in Afghanistan, the

separatist tendencies were afoot among the Pakistani Pashtuns in 1949; and in August 1949, Afridi tribesmen formally announced the birth of an independent Pashtunistan. The term Pashtunistan was originally coined by All India Radio.<sup>42</sup> Afghanistan was the first and only country which recognised this new state, and since then the issue has become a major irritant between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Afghanistan did not join the Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO) in 1953 that would encompass a number of Arab states, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, and also the western-sponsored Baghdad Pact in 1955 and its successor, the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), and Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) which Pakistan joined in September 1954, because these regional alliances ran contrary to Kabul's quest for a resolution of its significant border dispute with Pakistan concerning the Durand Line and the tribes of the North-West Frontier Province, and also a lesser border problem with Iran.<sup>43</sup>

Afghanistan's foreign policy towards Pakistan during 1950s, and Afghan non-alignment staying away from MEDO, CENTO and SEATO led the United States reject Afghanistan's demand for military assistance in 1954. It was perhaps the head strong Daoud's obsessive pursuit of Pashtunistan issue, and ethnic based foreign policies that caused his immediate turn to the Soviet Union, whose offers of military aid had long been rejected as a matter of policy. Daoud's 'ethno-language' policies gave the Soviets the first opportunity for their economic penetration and subversion of Afghanistan. One concrete result of the ensuing confrontation with Pakistan was that they dramatized the landlocked country's extreme vulnerabilities and blockade/ delay of transit facilities for vital Afghan import and exports through Pakistan. Soviet assistance to circumvent these threats to Afghan survival was prompt and psychologically effective. As, Angelo Rasanayagam in his book, *Afghanistan A Modern History* writes: "Abdul Rahman's elephant had begun its slow and steady advance. Its first victim was Afghan neutrality; its second, Afghan independence."<sup>44</sup>

The civil war that was unleashed during 1992 by 'ethno-political' groups was aimed at joining their ethnic groups with those of the new independent Afghanistan government. However, the civil war led to the emergence of Taliban, who captured 90 percent of the country. The emergence of Taliban was on the same ethnic lines as was dreamt by Abdul Rahman. Occupation of Kabul which brought over 70 per cent of the country under Taliban armed control, until its final occupation of

Mazar-e Sharif, and most of the north in September 1998, was most vicious and murderous.

Taliban visceral sectarian prejudices, demonstrated by their harsh impositions on the population and their treatment of non-Pashtun groups, destruction of Buddha statues and many other archaeological objects at the museum of Kabul, as well as smuggling of large number of these ancient objects to Pakistan and London markets;<sup>45</sup> ceasing of Nawruz celebration, Ashura Festival, prevention of Afghanistan's Hindus and Sikhs from their religious practices could be considered not merely as religious persecution, but more ethnic aggression regarding other ethnic groups' history, myths, traditions and beliefs in Afghanistan. All this eroded Taliban's earlier claims to legitimacy as a serious political force that could bring about order, stability and national reconciliation in a unified Afghanistan.<sup>46</sup>

The ethnic unrefined factional integration was substituted by a truly national unification in 2001, leading the government departments to be shared among important ethnic leaders and their family and kins. Despite the international community's vast financial and military support for establishment of a democratic nation, the systematic violation of state constitution by president Karzai and his team, and attachment to traditional and tribal practices, such as *Jirga* and religious councils; the government has so far remained deeply preoccupied, and for that matter marred by, the question of how to govern in order to cater to ethnic, factional and family politics.

The challenge ahead is to establish an appropriate legal-rational framework and institutions to ensure the development of a governmental system and polity, whose operations would be underpinned by principles of public participation, transparency, accountability, administrative-bureaucratic efficiency, social equity, observation of basic human rights, and promotion of merit rather than family connection and ethnic affiliation as the basis for governmental appointments.<sup>47</sup>

## CONCLUSION

State building process is not a natural one, but it is a political act based on social and economic considerations. It won't be exaggeration to claim that there is no nation-state in the world arena with a homogenous ethnic and religious purity. Nevertheless, every country consists of complex multi-ethnic and religious sects. As Aviel Roshwald<sup>48</sup> explains that a nation-state represents a population of collective identity and of its right to political,

territorial sovereignty based on its adherence to a common set of political values and on its allegiance to an existing or prospective, territorial defined state. As a result, the nation-state is inclusive of all who choose to participate in a common political culture, regardless of their ethnicity, race, religion and mother tongue.

The failure of Afghanistan government to achieve their goal of building a strong and unified nation-state has been defined by government officials and researchers alike, in terms of country's geophysical problems, ethnicity and religious sectarian differences, and tribal organization extant in the nation.<sup>49</sup> Hereby, from this prospect the problems of state building are safely externalized by blaming the alleged intrinsic and inherent conflictual and fragmentary character of the Afghan-society : more specifically, social and political disagreement, fragmentation, and opposition to centralized rule, independent of policies and practices of the nation/state building agents.

There is no doubt, that the geographical characteristics of Afghanistan and the socio-cultural and structural heterogeneity of Afghanistan society has played some part in affecting the processes of nation/state building in Afghanistan. But it could be argued here that the particular policies and practices of the central governments in Afghanistan toward various people and ethnic groups have transformed existing socio-cultural pluralism into articulated forms of social structural fragmentation and opposition to centralized power along ethnic, religious, sectarian, regional, and tribal parameters. These policies and practices have thereby produced a cumulatively negative impact on the process of state building in Afghanistan. Even after 2001, a crude ethnic factional integration into state structures has been substituted for a truly national unification. Nonetheless, the government departments have been shared among famous ethnic leaders and their family and kins, instead of making any endeavor for establishment of a real civic and democratic government, which could provide the opportunity for democratic participation of all ethnic groups in Afghanistan. As, the International Crisis Group (ICG) proposes that a moderation and democracy will only grow in Afghanistan if the government empowers assembly and strengthens non-traditional methods of participation at every conceivable level. If the nascent Afghanistan is going to build a state successfully, much less a nation, doing so will depend on a healthy and democratic participation of all ethnic and religious groups, rule of law, political freedom, accountability. And civil society will have to be strengthened as well. A national



government needs a national constituency, if it is gradually to democratize Afghanistan.<sup>50</sup>

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## THE EUROPEAN UNION'S SUPPORT TO GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN

SHEETAL SHARMA

Achieving gender equality and empowerment of women are essential for eliminating poverty and bringing about overall development in any society. Acknowledging the significance of equality and empowerment of women, the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education has been included as a stand alone Millennium Development Goal. All over the world, be it developed or developing or under developed world, women tend to suffer in various ways and in varying degrees from poverty, illiteracy, health, malnutrition, general issues of status and asymmetrical power relations. The asymmetry is further complicated by unequal access to basic resources, livelihood, social services, lack of basic human rights, information and technology. It is acknowledged and widely accepted that empowerment of women is key to achieving internationally agreed goals of development, and the promotion of gender equality and the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls are goals in their own right. The European Union (EU) first articulated its policy commitment to gender equality in development cooperation in 1995 (EC, 1995), after the UN Women's Conference in Beijing, and has redefined it several times since. This paper examines the attempts made by the EU in introducing programs and policies for promoting gender equality in Afghanistan. The paper is divided into 4 sections. The first section offers a general overview of situation of women in Afghanistan. The second section deals with a description of efforts made by the European Union for achieving gender equality and empowerment of women in general. The third section deals with the scale, programs and policies of the EU in Afghanistan to support gender equality initiatives. The final section discusses the success of these programs and the challenges that come in the way of achieving the goals of empowerment of women.

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**AFGHANISTAN AND AFGHAN WOMEN**

Afghanistan, the land of Afghans has been known by the three names, "Aryana" in ancient times, "Khurasan" in the medieval ages and "Afghanistan" today.<sup>1</sup> Located in Central Asia, Afghanistan is land-locked on all the four sides, bound on the north by the Central Asian Republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, on the west by Iran, on the east and south by Pakistan, and on the extreme north-east of the tip of Wakhan by the People's Republic of China.<sup>2</sup> The total area of Afghanistan is approximately 652,225 square kilometers, almost equal to the size of France; almost one-third of the area in Afghanistan is mountainous, with beautiful terrains and abundant natural resources. Afghanistan has an ancient history of several thousand years. According to historical investigations it was around 6,000 BC that civilization had emerged in the territories of Afghanistan and its neighbouring lands. Archaeological evidences show that, in Ami region, copper objects were used in those days. In addition, in other places such as Nad Ali, Zaranj, Mandigak and Sistan many objects were discovered which pertain to prehistoric period.<sup>3</sup> The earliest era of the history of Afghanistan begins with the Vedic period in about 1,400 BC and continues to the Avestic period around 1,200 BC. It was during this period that Aryans in Balkh changed their mode of life from primitive and nomadic to a settled and civilized one. It is here that Zarathustra started the teaching of the Mozdisna religion.<sup>4</sup> It was at the beginning of the second century that Kanishka the Great, King of Afghanistan, founded the great dynasty of Koshanis. During the Koshani period, which lasted until the end of the 4th century, the civilization and culture within Afghanistan were enriched by elements from Zarathustran, Indian, Buddhist and Greek cultures. The culture and civilization of the Koshani period passed through stages of development as well as decline and continued until the beginning of the Islamic period and the influence of Arab armies; it was then replaced, in the first Islamic century, about 650 AD, by another complex civilization and culture called the first Islamic culture of Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup> The modern history of Afghanistan begins with the victorious uprising of 1919 of the people of Afghanistan against British colonialism, and the courageous campaign prior to that. It also had a deep influence on the region and on world affairs. The restoration of national independence in 1919 was the beginning of important social changes in the country. One of the features of the modern history of Afghanistan is the campaign towards the social freedom of the people of

the country. The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) was established in April 1978.<sup>6</sup>

Afghanistan is an Islamic state and a patriarchal society. Islam is the acknowledged and dominant religion, followed by the overwhelming majority of people in Afghanistan. Along with Muslims the country also has population of Hindus and Sikhs, although in a very small percentage. The status of women in Afghanistan has traditionally been subordinate to men. The position of women has varied from time to time throughout the history according to their age, socio-cultural norms, ethnicity and other political factors in play. In fact women in Afghanistan have always been subservient to the males in the family, either father, brother, or husband and father-in-law or other male relatives. Obedience and silence is considered to be their most valuable characteristic. The status of women can be gauged through the fact that how a family reacts to the birth of a female child. Birth of a female is considered to be unpleasant, and unfortunate for the entire family among all the types of communities whether settled in an area or nomadic in nature. Men often go for second marriage if the first wife is unable to give birth to a male child. Girls since childhood are trained to be good and obedient daughters and wife, who is supposed to bear all the domestic responsibilities and be tolerant. Except for few cases, no one pays attention to education of girls, their progress or well-being. They were and till date are usually married at a very young age, between 13-16 years, often to old and wealthy men. They are also exchanged for *Toyana* or marriage price and polygyny too is practiced and sanctioned in Islam.<sup>7</sup> Young girls have no right to raise any question regarding marriage let alone oppose it. Their marriage is decided and arranged by their parents and they have absolutely no say in it. If their married life is not happy or going smooth, even then Afghan women do not have any right to ask for divorce. Divorce is easy if the husband demands it. Divorce is seen as social stigma and families especially family of the girls desist it. Women continue to suffer in unhealthy relationships, they are deprived of their rights, beaten and abused but cannot leave their husband's house. A large number of women in order to escape misery tend to commit suicide or run away, but if they are caught or fail in the attempt to take away their life, the situation becomes all the more miserable for them. Most of the Afghan women tend to spend their entire life within the four walls of the household. They are hardly connected to the outside world. Their life revolves around fulfilment of their duties, taking care of children and elderly, helping in agriculture and taking care of cattle.

Women do not own any property and are economically dependent upon their husbands. The division of men's and women's world is clear in Afghan society. Women are not allowed to participate openly in any matter in the public domain. They have to cover themselves up from head to toe when they step outside, and have to be escorted by a male member of the family. Afghans are mostly exogamous, but some instances of endogamy are also found. Since Afghanistan is a patriarchal society, all the decisions pertaining to domestic life and public life of women are made by male members. A male usually the eldest in the family decides about residence, education of the children, their marriage and permission to work. A man is allowed to punish his wife, sometimes to death if she attempts adulterous actions.<sup>8</sup>

It was during the reign of Amir Habibullah<sup>9</sup> (1901-1919) that some degree of recognition was accorded to women and they were given a role outside that of motherhood and a housewife. At this time only Mahmood Beg Tarzi,<sup>10</sup> argued against overly protective restrictions on women and pleaded that Islam does not deny education to women. He regarded it Islamic to provide women with an opportunity to function fully in society. He stressed that it was only with educated women in the home that the family could remain strong and the nation could progress.<sup>11</sup>

During the rule of Amir Amanullah co-educational schools were established in Kabul and steps were taken in order to improve participation of women in the social affairs of the nation. Afghan Youth Organization was one of the progressive organizations that advocated change and wanted problems of women to be addressed. Two schools for girls were established in 1921 in Kabul city, where students were taught in French, but majority of the girls enrolling in these schools were from upper strata of the society. A special theatre for women was also established in 1921 in Paghman. During the same year, a newspaper for women called *Irshadun-nisa* or Guidance for Women, began its publication. The first hospital for women and children was also established the same year. In the reign of Amir Amanullah, the law of abolishing *Purdah* (veil) and the law of improving women's living conditions were adopted during 1927-1928. However, all these reforms introduced during the era of Amanullah were abolished with his fall in 1929.<sup>12</sup> The period after this was a mix of reformist and conservative forces, according differential degree of status and freedom to women and attempting to write fate of women in Afghan society.

For the first time in the history of Afghanistan in 1964, the constitution of the country formally gave equal social, political and legal rights to men

and women. The constitution assured the participation and election of women in parliament. In 1965, the next year itself, four women were elected to parliament.<sup>13</sup> The constitutional provisions were significant steps towards the empowerment and improvement of the status of women in Afghanistan. But till date there are challenges in fulfilling the constitutional guarantee of equality, there are problems in marriage laws, abolition of polygamy, education of women, property rights and inheritance, political participation etc. Women in Afghanistan have been marginalised and have remained subordinate to men throughout history. Their position in the family is dependent upon many socio-cultural and religious factors that tend to discriminate women in almost every sphere of life. Since Afghanistan is multi-ethnic and tribal society, many of the practices that discriminate women are rooted in customs and religious values, hence it is difficult for women to challenge these deep rooted ideologies and practices. In addition, long years of war, weak political institutions, and violence in the country have deteriorated the position of women in the society. At different points of time in history, although reforms had been introduced for empowerment of women but these did not result in any substantial change or gain. Either the reforms were opposed by strong tribal or religious groups, or they were challenged by patriarchal forces. There were setbacks during the civil war in early 1990s as well. And since Taliban came into power in 1996, the life and situation became miserable for majority of women, in fact it took a regressive turn.

The Taliban imposed severe restrictions<sup>14</sup> upon women. They were denied basic rights and faced a crisis that threatened their very existence. Some of the restrictions that Taliban had placed upon women were, complete ban on women working outside their homes, including professions such as teachers, doctors and engineers, ban on studying at school, university or any other educational institution, or participating in public life and there was complete restriction on women's movement outside their houses without a *mahram*.<sup>15</sup> Under the Taliban regime life of the women in Afghanistan had become worse as compared to any other point of time in Afghan history and society. The Taliban punished both men and women, those whom they found guilty for not following their dictates in public gatherings. The so called justice in these public gatherings was carried out in an arbitrary fashion and was gruesome. The punishments were no less than flogging, beheadings, hangings, and blind shooting. A large number of instances of atrocities against women happened during the rule of the Taliban, from 1996 to 2001, and these



were regularly reported in national and international media.<sup>16</sup>

Since the fall of the Taliban, there has been a slight improvement in status of women. The government and non-governmental institutions and agencies started addressing the issues pertaining to women, which were previously considered as private matters. Article 22 in Chapter Two, titled as 'Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens' of the Afghan Constitution<sup>17</sup> of 2004 states that "Any kind of discrimination and privilege between the citizens of Afghanistan are prohibited. And the citizens of Afghanistan - whether man or woman- have equal rights and duties before the law". Efforts are being made by government, national and international organizations to bring equality among men and women.

#### THE EU'S COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

The European Union (EU) first articulated its policy commitment to gender equality in development cooperation in 1995 (EC, 1995) following the Beijing UN Women's Conference, and has redefined it several times since. The 2007 Conclusions of the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) are the strongest expression of policy till date, expanding the focus beyond development cooperation.<sup>18</sup> These state that, "Gender equality is a fundamental human right, a question of social justice and also a core value of the EU, including EU development policy [as underlined by the European Consensus on Development (2005) and the Development Cooperation Instrument.] The promotion of gender equality and the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls are goals in their own right and also instrumental and key to achieving internationally agreed development goals".<sup>19</sup>

Considering the significant role played by women in growth of societies, peace building initiatives and process of development, gender equality and empowerment of women have been mainstreamed in all the development policies and programmes initiated and launched by the EU through its 2010 'Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development'. In a Communication 'A Decent Life for All', issued in February 2013, the EU asserts that the post-2015 framework should include the empowerment of women and gender equality as vital components for inclusive and sustainable development, as well as important values in their own right.<sup>20</sup>

The action taken by the EU on gender equality and development is

currently financed through two main financial instruments, these are, 1) 'Investing in People' and 2) the 'European Union Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights'. The support to programs and initiatives for achieving gender equality and empowerment of women is emphasized in the 2005 'European consensus on development' as a cross-cutting issue. The 2007 Communication 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation' is one of the first steps towards a coordinated EU approach on the issue of gender equality and empowerment of women.

While Gender Equality is a common objective and a common value of the entire EU, the Consensus recognises Gender Equality as a goal in its own right. The European Commission on the occasion of the 2010 International Women's Day and the 15th anniversary of the World Conference on Women<sup>21</sup> adopted a Women's Charter *Strengthening the commitment to equality between women and men: a women's charter* and reaffirmed European Commission's commitment for the promotion of equality between women and men, in Europe and throughout the world. The European Commission has highlighted the need to take gender equality into account while formulating all its policies. In the Women's Charter it proposed five specific fields of action,<sup>22</sup> these are:

- 1) *Economic independence*: Committing to ensure full realisation of women's potential and use of her skills. The Commission in the charter reiterates that economic independence can be and should be achieved by fighting against discrimination and segregation in labour market, educational stereotypes, employment conditions, and asymmetrical sharing of responsibilities between men and women. The Commission committed to ensure that its actions lead to better gender distribution in the labour market, and rise in pay, full time, stable and quality jobs for women.
- 2) *Equal Pay*: The Commission committed itself to fight against gaps in wages by mobilising all available instruments, including legislative instruments and ensure equal pay for men and women (for equal work or work of equal value).
- 3) *Fair representation of women in decision-making and positions of power*: In order to realise the goal of gender equality the Commission undertakes to act for greater representation of women, in particular by adopting incentives at European Union level. The Commission proposes to take effective action to increase representation of women in the areas where they are under-

represented as compared to men, and in positions of power, both in public and private sector.

- 4) *Respect for women's dignity and integrity, end gender-based violence, including harmful customary or traditional practices*: Reiterating the Commission's commitment to fundamental human rights, the commission aims to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and crime against women, and increase access to health care services.
- 5) *External action of the European Union in respect to equality between women and men* will attempt for the sustainable social and economic development in societies world over. The Commission undertakes to defend equality between women and men in its relations with third countries. It will carry out awareness-raising programs, and cooperate with competent international and regional organisations, and will support State and Non-State actors for the promotion of gender equality.

With the identification of above mentioned five specific areas of action, the European Commission and the European Union Member States are constantly engaged in the process of making efforts to promote gender equality and empowerment of women within the European Union and in the developing world. The European Union is signatories to International Agreements and Declarations supporting Gender Equality. The European Consensus<sup>23</sup> highlights the importance of Gender Equality in the context of the new aid modalities. Furthermore, the policy document identifies Gender Equality as one of the five common principles<sup>24</sup> of European Union development cooperation. The European Union is committed to the equality of women and men, girls and boys in its development cooperation Agreements with its partners in other regions. The *Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men*<sup>25</sup> document identifies the 'promotion of women's rights and empowerment outside the European Union' as one of six priority areas. The six priority areas are: achieving equal economic independence for women and men; enhancing reconciliation of work, private and family life; promoting equal participation of women and men in decision making; eradicating gender-based violence and trafficking; eliminating gender stereotypes in society; promoting gender equality outside the European Union. To achieve its aim the European Union and its member states have adopted a twin-track strategy comprising of a) the mainstreaming of Gender Equality in all policies, strategies and actions and, b) the financing

of measures which directly support women's empowerment.<sup>26</sup>

### THE EU'S ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

The EU has expressed a strong and long-term commitment to Afghanistan and the Afghan people for reconstruction of war-torn economy, society and polity. In June 2014, the Foreign Affairs Council agreed for a new strategy for Afghanistan until the end of 2016. The EU and almost all the Member States have a consensus that the overarching strategic goal of EU's assistance is the development of democratic and institutional framework in Afghanistan, to provide the necessary infrastructural base to be resilient in order to safeguard progress that has been achieved till date and provide solid platform for a more effective and finally a sustainable Afghan state. The new strategy document provides a framework to better coordinate EU and Member States' civilian engagement in Afghanistan from mid-2014 to 2016, setting out the EU's objectives and outlining the actions and initiatives planned to achieve those objectives. The strategy is sufficiently flexible to both influence and respond appropriately to the range of potential scenarios in Afghanistan.<sup>27</sup> Some of the particular areas that are focussed in the strategy are: Promoting peace, security and regional stability; Reinforcing democracy; Encouraging economic and human development; Fostering the rule of law and respect for human rights, in particular the rights of women.

Afghanistan receives more development aid from the EU and its Member States than any other country. The EU is one of the major donors providing official development assistance (ODA) as well as humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. The EU set up a Delegation in Kabul in February 2002, immediately after the establishment of the Interim Transitional Authority headed by President Hamid Karzai. By the end of 2013, the EU had committed • 3 billion, including • 615 million in humanitarian assistance and disbursed more than • 2.5 billion, i.e. 81% of the funds it committed for this period.<sup>28</sup> Data in Table 1 presents figures pertaining to the amount of aid that EU has offered to Afghanistan in the last decade.

The EU recently signed an agreement with the new Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to provide up to •1.4 billion in development assistance over the next seven years i.e. up to 2020 – the largest EU programme in any country. The EU works in tandem with the Afghan Government and international partners to promote effective and coordinated spending of development assistance. The EU spends most of

TABLE 1: THE EU AID TO AFGHANISTAN FROM 2002 – 2013 IN • MILLION

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Commitments</i>	<i>Disbursed</i>
2002	247.59	151.04
2003	285.55	213.90
2004	247.55	171.19
2005	224.48	206.11
2006	200.53	175.08
2007	195.90	224.59
2008	214.49	213.27
2009	269.83	285.65
2010	254.61	215.20
2011	347.00	261.41
2012	283.61	199.63
2013	316.86	188.41
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.088.00</b>	<b>2.506.38</b>

*Source:* [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/afghanistan/eu\\_afghanistan/development\\_cooperation/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/afghanistan/eu_afghanistan/development_cooperation/index_en.htm),

its funds in supporting programs and initiatives that intend to bring improvements in the field of health, agriculture, policing and the democratic oversight of government. Since 2007, the EU has also had a police mission, currently 290 people, in the country to provide specialised training and improve links with other parts of the justice system.<sup>29</sup>

Within the broad framework of the EU-Afghanistan Country Strategy paper, the development aid or resources are earmarked for six areas of cooperation, three of which are priorities, or 'focal' areas and three are 'non-focal'. The focal areas include Governance, Rural development, and Health, whereas the non-focal areas include, Social protection, Mine clearance, and Regional cooperation. Of an • 610 million sum for the initial Multiannual Indicative Programme(MIP) for the period 2007-10 (MIP-I), • 542 million were used in three priority areas, these are governance (42%), rural development (28%) and health (20%). The • 68 million balance was allocated for social protection (3.9%), de-mining activities (3.6 %) and regional cooperation (3.6 %).The second Multiannual Indicative Programme 2011-13 (MIP II)included a • 600 million financial allocation. MIP II prioritised rural development (34.3%), governance and rule of law

(41%) and health and social protection (22.2%) with regional cooperation (2.5%) as a non-focal area.<sup>30</sup> In tune with high level of political commitments, the new Country Multi-Annual Programme (2014-20) aims towards at least comparable budgetary levels. In such preparation, the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) provides the basic reference for the Government and the donors.<sup>31</sup>

Assistance from the EU Budget is managed by the European Commission (EC), through the EU Delegation to Afghanistan in Kabul, having as main legal basis the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI).<sup>32</sup> The EC legal and strategic framework for development cooperation with Afghanistan includes a Country Strategy Paper (CSP), and a Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP). CSP and MIPs are formally agreed with the Government of Afghanistan. These agreements are further implemented through Annual Action Programmes (AAP) and Financing Agreements, concerning the specific actions, signed with the Ministry of Finance. The first CSP and MIP (2003-2006) focused and promoted stability in the region, reduction of poverty by supporting, mainly, rural development, food security, governance, infrastructure and health.<sup>33</sup>

The EU assistance is aligned with the priorities and national priority programmes (NPPs) run by the Afghan government. The EU subscribes to the New Deal for Engagement with fragile states – on donor harmonisation and aid effectiveness – endorsed by Afghanistan and adopted by donors in Busan (2011). In March 2012, in Kabul, the EU launched negotiations for a long-term Cooperation Partnership Development Agreement with Afghanistan, covering a broad range of sectors such as trade, development and justice and home affairs. At regional level, the EU supports the 'Heart of Asia' Ministerial Conference that aims to boost trade and transit and building confidence with neighbouring countries in south Asia. Beyond bilateral assistance, Afghanistan also benefits from various other programs, such as 1) Regional EU programmes for Asia. The Aid for Uprooted People programme, for example, is giving support for the voluntary return and reintegration of Afghan refugees as well as assisting displaced Afghans in Pakistan and Iran. The Erasmus Mundus programme promotes cooperation in higher education. 2) Thematic programmes include the food security programme which is providing assistance to improve food safety, especially amongst the poorest people. 3) The country also benefits from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the Instrument for Stability (IfS).

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**AID EFFECTIVENESS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD**

Afghanistan is gradually recovering from more than three decades of conflict. With election of new president and significant drawdown of international security forces, the year 2014 witnessed a process of complex transition that is supposed to precede the 'Decade of Transformation' (2015 to 2024). As compared to the last decade today Afghanistan is in a much better position in terms of human development after the fall of the Islamic Emirate. Access to primary healthcare has increased from 9% of the population to more than 57%; more than 8 million students are enrolled in schools, with 39% of girls. New and rehabilitated highways and roads have cut travel times between the main regional centres by 75%. However, 36% of the population still lives in poverty. Only 26% of the population can read and write. Corruption continues to be a major problem, affecting the everyday life of Afghan citizens and undermining development.<sup>34</sup>

Although the Afghan government is still facing enormous challenges to assert control over security and development throughout the country, but it is committed to make progress on security, sustainable economic growth and domestic revenues, poverty reduction, protection of human rights, in order to build a functional democracy based on credible institutions and to hold transparent, inclusive and fair elections. In order to support its agenda for sustainable development the international community too, has committed to support Afghanistan in addressing sustainable socio-economic development and peace and stability in the country and in the region, through the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. The stabilisation and development of Afghanistan are priorities for the EU. To maximise the impact of EU aid and improve overall aid effectiveness, the EU is promoting coordination amongst donors.<sup>35</sup>

The European NGO Working Group on Women's Human Rights in Afghanistan appreciated the efforts and initiatives of Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to promote women's rights in the country. Some of the initiatives taken by the government are: adoption of a Constitution that guarantees women equal rights with men; Ratification of the Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; Formation of National Policy Frameworks to mainstream gender equity; Adoption of a National Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation and Justice; Adoption of a new Afghan Juvenile Code; Approval of a new Marriage Contract (*Nikah Nama*) by the Supreme Court.<sup>36</sup>

A large number of non-governmental organizations,<sup>37</sup> international humanitarian organizations and agencies of European origin are engaged in fighting for women's rights. The European NGO working group has also identified priority areas to ensure that human rights of women and girls are protected under the rule of law.<sup>38</sup> These priorities are: improve access to justice for women; develop and implement strategies to fight violence against women (VAW); rehabilitation of women released from detention; implement the Marriage Contract; ensure reporting to the CEDAW Committee; ensure freedom of speech/media; reinvigorate the Action Plan for Transitional Justice; implement the Juvenile Justice Code; and Gender mainstreaming. At the core of these policies lies the rationale that women are at the centre of sustainable social and economic development, poverty reduction and environmental protection.

The EU has invested huge amount of resources and has taken important steps to support greater Gender Equality both within and outside the Union. Gender Equality has become an important and recognized part of the dialogue with ever more partner countries and is actively being incorporated into the EU's consultations with civil society. One of the major assets the EU has to promote Gender Equality in its external relations is to learn from its own models and best practice, such as in Nordic countries. However one of the main concerns is that "at the social and cultural level there are important factors which impede progress towards the achievement of Gender Equality. Thus, traditional social structures may offer only limited incentives for changing the existing distribution of power between men and women, especially to those with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo." As a result, "effective gender mainstreaming has not been fully integrated into country strategies or in the practice of EU development cooperation."<sup>39</sup> In this context the best practices from the member states of the Union may not be applicable to other societies and cultures. The international effort to empower women in traditional societies like Afghanistan, tend to fail because of many reasons. The foremost is the problem that the notion of empowerment is defined and operationalised as per the indicators developed by the western parameters. The West's talk of women's rights in terms of jobs, education and not enforcing the veil is mostly lost on the women trapped in never-ending war. Moreover the international effort has hardly touched the lives of women in rural Afghanistan.<sup>40</sup> The existing gap between theory and practice can be bridged by understanding what Afghan women actually want? What are the areas in which they seek support, what is



their perspective? What kind of change they expect, and what is meant by empowerment according to their situation? What is meant by empowerment in developed countries is quite different from what women understand by empowerment in the traditional societies. Women's conception of empowerment, nature and degree of freedom enjoyed, ability to make decisions, participation in everyday life, and related aspects are historically determined and culturally binding even when they are repressive in nature.<sup>41</sup>

Afghan women have been living in the general atmosphere of insecurity, lawlessness, fear, intimidation and uncertainty. Apart from civil war, and failure of democratic institutions to deliver justice, they have been victims of traditional practices that are sanctioned by religion. A conservative interpretation of Islam has resulted in shaping perceptions of men and women in Afghanistan which reproduces discriminatory practices and exploitation of women. The establishment of Ministry of Women's Affairs offered a ray of hope for women in distress, however the ministry lacks effective mechanism and authority to control or keep a check on crime and violence against women. A large number of cases of abuse and violence against women go unreported. In the case of absence of accurate statistics, it becomes difficult to develop strategies and mechanism to counter exploitation of women. "Even when domestic abuse is acknowledged, Afghan society puts the blame on the woman — that she is not a good woman; that she is suffering at home because she is not behaving like a good mother or a good wife. And that's why the husband has the right to beat her...majority of Afghan women experience some kind of domestic abuse and rarely report it".<sup>42</sup>

Renewing the structure and strengthening of institutional mechanism, legal system and political will is necessary for empowerment of women, but more important is attitudinal change. Most of the efforts of international organizations end up as temporary measures, such as providing sewing machines, part-time employment, or vocational training. In order to make the economic independence of women sustainable; efforts are required to make the environment in which women live, conducive for employment.<sup>43</sup> In conservative societies and cultures, any voice raised by women is seen as sign of rebellion. The help offered by international organizations is perceived by men as a strategy of western forces to destroy tradition and culture of Afghan society. The role of international organizations and activists is perceived as negative, and at times some people also perceive this as a scheme against norms of society to erode culture. Women and

girls in the family are not encouraged to meet them or seek help/advice. Women too feel that, it is difficult to break from norms of the society in the name of empowerment. The approaches to empowerment of women and the success of subsequent programs and policies rely upon the socio-cultural specificities and institutional configuration of any given society. A large number of dimensions such as prevalent norms, traditions, language, religion, meanings, identities and cultural practices are crucial in determining the content and intent of programs and policies for empowerment of women. Hence it is extremely relevant to understand the limited applicability of mechanisms adopted by international agencies guided by the western framework.<sup>44</sup> Thus a well-integrated and comprehensive approach is required in order to realise goals of empowerment of Afghan women that integrates the socio-cultural, historical and political specificities of Afghan society and needs of women within Afghan context.

By 2020 Afghanistan is committed to eliminating gender disparity at all levels of education, promoting gender equality, empowering women, giving everyone access to justice, and reducing the maternal mortality rate by 75 percent, according to the country's third and fifth national Millennium Development Goals (nMDGs).<sup>45</sup> This goal cannot be realised unless men are also made as partners in the process of empowerment of women. The approach towards empowerment of women relies upon coordination between institutional setup and social forces and one cannot leave men out of the process and efforts. The cooperation from men is far more important than any other factor or actor because it is the men who can stand with women in challenging and altering the socio-cultural framework of society that discriminates women, and where discrimination is perpetuated mostly by males. Rather than seeing men as rivals or empowering women against men, the situation demands a concerted effort of both men and women, in equal proportions, if not greater to achieve goals of empowerment of women. The noble goal of empowerment of women will not be accomplished merely by introducing legal and constitutional measures. In order to translate these provisions in practice efficient planning, implementation and strategic actions are necessary. There is no easy way to achieve empowerment; it is a long process, the road ahead is full of difficulties and obstacles, nevertheless the task is not unachievable. An effective solution lies in a comprehensive approach which affects all the spheres of life of Afghan women, their economic welfare, social justice, health, education, fertility, and their customs and traditions.

These areas cannot be pitched against one another but must be addressed in an integrated fashion.

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9. Habibullah Khan (June 3, 1872 – February 20, 1919) was the son of Amir Abdur Rahman, and the father of King Amanullah Khan. He ruled Afghanistan from 1901, until he was assassinated in 1919. Habibullah Khan kept Afghanistan out of World War I. During his reign, Habibullah started to modernize his country. He imported automobiles, and built various roads. In 1904, the first modern school in Afghanistan was built (Habibia), and electricity was brought to Kabul.
10. Mahmud Beg Tarzi (August 23, 1865 – November 22, 1933) was an Ambassador, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, leader of the constitutionalist movement, politician and one of Afghanistan's greatest intellectuals. He is known as the father of Afghan journalism. As a prominent modern thinker, he is one of the key figures in the history of Afghanistan. Tarzi was an Afghan nationalist who held many government positions in his life. He was a reformist individual amongst his extended family members who ruled Afghanistan at the beginning of the 20th century. He reached the high offices of government as a chief adviser and Foreign Minister. He was a main force behind Habibullah Khan's social reforms, especially with regard to education. These reforms included changing the medieval schools and *madrasah* systems, allowing publication of books and journals, and lifting all restrictions that banned girls and women from the rest of society. He led the charge for modernization – doing so as a strong opponent of religious obscurantism. Although he was very religious himself but he was strongly against the state establishing religion. (Source: [www.tarzifamily.com/people/historical/MahmudTarzi.html](http://www.tarzifamily.com/people/historical/MahmudTarzi.html), accessed on 11/12/2015).
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14. Ban on dealing with male shopkeepers. Ban on being treated by a male doctor.

Compulsory wearing of a long veil (*Burqa*) which covers women from head to toe. Whipping, beating and verbal abuse of women whose *Burqa* is not worn in accordance to Taliban rules. The same applies to women found in public without a *mahram*. Whipping of women in public for having uncovered ankles. Public stoning of women for having sex outside marriage (a number of lovers are stoned to death under this rule.) Ban on all use of make-up (a number of women's fingers have been amputated for having painted nails). A ban on women from talking or shaking hands with non-*mahram* males. A ban on women for laughing loudly (no stranger should hear the voice of a women). A ban on wearing high heeled shoes which would produce sound while walking as hearing the sound of a women's step is forbidden. A ban on women using a taxi without a *mahram*. Banning women's presence in radio, television and gatherings of any kind. Banning women from playing any sport or entering a sports centre or club. A ban on women riding a bicycle or a motorcycle even with their *mahrams*. A ban on women wearing brightly colored clothing (in their terms "sexually attractive colors"). Banning women's gatherings on festive occasions such as the *Eids* or for a recreational purpose. Banning women from washing clothes next to rivers or at public places. All place names with the word "women" in it have been changed. For example "women's garden" has been renamed "spring garden". Banning women from appearing on the balcony of their apartments or houses. Compulsory painting of all windows so that women cannot be seen from the outside. Banning male tailors from taking measurements or sewing women's clothes. Banned from using female public baths. Public buses have been separated into male and female buses. A Ban on being photographed or filmed. A Ban on women's pictures being printed on newspapers and books or even hung in their own houses. Ban on listening to music not for women but for men as well. Total ban on watching movies, television and video for everyone. (Source: Restrictions Placed on Women by the Taliban, compiled by the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), available at <http://www.islamfortoday.com/afghanistanwomen4.htm>, accessed on 21/7/2011).

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## REGIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING SECURITY IN AFGHANISTAN, 2001 - 2014

AZIZ AHMAD BASAM

### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this paper is to identify the regional factors affecting security in Afghanistan. The first part covers two countries of South Asia- Pakistan and India. It also discusses conflicts in the region which directly or indirectly affect the security situation in Afghanistan. The second part focuses on Pakistan and its interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs by supporting the terrorist groups and the Taliban which destabilise Afghanistan. The third part focusses on Iran's role and its impact on the security situation in Afghanistan as well as the water disputes between Iran and Afghanistan.*

**Keywords:** *Security, Afghanistan, India-Pakistan relationship, Iran-Afghanistan, water disputes, Taliban.*

### INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan's contemporary history, since the last three decades has shown that many factors have affected the security situation, especially during the last decade. The security situation is deteriorating. There are internal factors such as corrupt governance, lack of equipment for the national security forces, etc. On the other hand, regional factors such as the rivalry between India and Pakistan, Pakistan's direct or indirect interference in Afghanistan by supporting terrorist groups and also the indirect interference of Iran plus water disputes between Iran and Afghanistan have been the main factors which have affected the security situation in Afghanistan.

Regional organisations and associations have always sought potential solutions for its member states, but if we look at the present status of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the India-

Pakistan rivalry has been an obstacle to what SAARC should achieve. Meanwhile, SAARC mostly focuses on economic cooperation of the member states.

There have been a number of reports, articles, op-eds about various regional factors affecting security in Afghanistan and a number of authors have pointed different facts and factors which caused security concerns in Afghanistan. After the fall of Taliban, eastern and western neighbours of Afghanistan, such as Pakistan and Iran, besides Pakistan's hostile relations with India, led to the deterioration of security in the region especially in Afghanistan due to its strategic location.

For receiving continuous financial support from the U.S., Pakistan has been an ally supposedly for fighting terrorist groups, while at the same time there is enough evidence to show Pakistan's support to insurgent groups in Afghanistan. Pakistan has a dual policy towards Afghanistan." Afghanistan continues to reel under the pernicious impact of the ten year old war on terror and everyone is keeping their fingers crossed over the extent of the destabilising impact of US withdrawal, not only on Afghanistan and Pakistan but on the whole region".<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Iran, tends to show support or have influence on minority groups in Afghanistan. While this could be a way of interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, at the same time Iran's turbulent relationship with the US makes Iran have this type of status in the region. Helmand river is also an issue which resulted in the deterioration of relationship between Iran and Afghanistan. Similar to the issue of Durand Line between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the water disputes between Afghanistan and Iran are a major problem.

While insurgency in Afghanistan has emerged as a strategic threat to its survival and future, efforts are going on for a regional solution to the conflicts and insurgency in Afghanistan. A regional solution has been promoted by Turkey, Pakistan, Iran and a few others. But the main question is whether a regional solution is the key to managing the security challenges of Afghanistan, considering the role of Iran, Pakistan and India - the three close neighbours of Afghanistan, in influencing trends, issues and events in the country over the last four decades.<sup>2</sup>

This paper focuses mainly on a specific period starting after the fall of Taliban from December 2001 when prominent Afghans met in Bonn, Germany until the end of ex-President Hamid Karzai's presidency in mid-2014. A number of books, articles, news articles and reports are used in this paper which are written by prominent think tanks such as RUSI (Royal



United Services Institute) and RAND Corporation. In conclusion, it has been stated that SAARC could possibly be a potential or non-potential supportive association for Afghanistan to help it overcome its security challenges at present and in future.

## REGIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING SECURITY IN AFGHANISTAN

### *1. India-Pakistan Rivalry*

India and Pakistan have been competing with each other since a long time which has directly or indirectly affected the security situation in Afghanistan. The Indo-Pak competition in Afghanistan long precedes the arrival of the ex-president Hamid Karzai's regime. "Both states, since their emergence from the break-up of the British colonial empire in South Asia in 1947, have had ties with a range of Afghan governments".<sup>3</sup>

The foreign policy of India was purposeless in the past. Since the end of 2001, India's role has been bigger in economic, diplomatic and military sphere in order to rebuild a newer strategy and role in the region. The financial support of India to Afghanistan far surpasses that of Pakistan. Afghanistan is suspicious towards Pakistan due to its support for the Taliban. This is in part due to ongoing disputes over the Durand Line, which has never been resolved between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan have conflicts over the Durand Line since many decades. But during the long rule of King Zahir Shah (1933-1973), India actually had better relations with Afghanistan than Pakistan, but there was a short break during the 1965 Indo-Pakistani conflict. Even after Zahir's overthrow in 1973, India managed to maintain close ties with the subsequent communist regimes.<sup>4</sup>

It is clear that both India and Pakistan have their own objectives towards Afghanistan. Both countries look for serving their national interests. Pakistan always supports the insurgent groups in Afghanistan in order to keep the situation tense in the region, to keep India at bay in the region. Pakistan's longstanding conflict with India and suspicion of its regional engagement, especially in Afghanistan, has adversely affected the security situation. "While there have been encouraging recent developments between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Pakistan's suspicion of India threatens to entrench relations of conflict and competition at the expense of cooperation and stability. Many of its leaders were educated in India, including Afghan ex-President Hamid Karzai".<sup>5</sup>

It is believed that India's goals in Afghanistan are two-fold as stated by Ganguly: First, India always seeks to prevent a restoration of any form of a resurgent Taliban regime in the state. Moreover, India seeks to limit Pakistan's influence over any emergent regime in Afghanistan and to ensure that no regime emerges in Afghanistan that is fundamentally hostile towards India. Second, India is seeking to develop long-term diplomatic ties and economic arrangements with a stable, popular and pro-Indian regime in Afghanistan, which then enables India to leapfrog Pakistan and build robust strategic and economic ties with the energy rich states of Central Asia.<sup>6</sup>

India and Pakistan are seeking bigger roles in the region. With the expansion of India's influence in Afghanistan and the region and without its deteriorated relationship with Pakistan, India would have had a hegemonic status in the region while Pakistan is losing its position of economic and strategic privilege. "Pakistan to this day, continues its long-term strategy of making Afghanistan part of its sphere of influence, by using nefarious and covert ways. This is why any hint of Indian influence in Afghanistan is so galling to the Pakistani elite, security establishment, and even the Pakistani media and press".<sup>7</sup>

The biggest challenge for India's security and foreign policy is Pakistan and its unsolved dilemma in South Asia. Both countries are trapped in their old rivalries and challenges. Pakistan is a huge obstacle to India for having a bigger role in the region and international system.<sup>8</sup> Pakistan sees India's growing influence, particularly its bigger presence in Afghanistan as a threat. Shortly after the fall of the Taliban, India re-established several consulates in Afghanistan's provinces.

For decades India and Pakistan have struggled to have bigger roles within Afghanistan and their rivalry caused security problems for Afghanistan. Throughout this struggle, Pakistan has seen Afghanistan as a vital source and strategically important for itself. Taliban's presence in Afghanistan gives Pakistan a chance to decrease India's regional power expansion. This support has led to increased instability in Afghanistan, both through heightened terrorist activity and increased opium cultivation.<sup>9</sup> At the same time India wants to support Afghanistan and the Afghan government in order to win the hearts and minds of Afghan people. Therefore, India has provided over two billion US dollars of financial support to Afghanistan since 2001, after the overthrow of the Taliban.

## *2. Afghan-Pakistan Relationship*

If we look at the previous few decades, Pakistan has been interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs which has adversely affected the security situation in Afghanistan. The rise of Taliban and other terrorist networks such as Haqqani Network is due to Pakistan's policy of destabilising Afghanistan. Pakistan's friendship or hostility towards Afghanistan dates back to the Durand Line agreement or dispute between British India and Afghanistan in 1903. After this imaginary line was drawn, the Afghan Prime Minister Sardar Daud Khan's nationalist agenda was born, and a territorial dispute formally came into being, along 2,400 kilometres of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>10</sup>

The relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are fragile. Pakistanis see security and stability in Afghanistan contrary to their national security and focus on political, economic and military dependence of Afghanistan on Pakistan.<sup>11</sup> The Durand Line is still as controversial as always and there is an urgent requirement for both military and political measures to rethink about the situation and serious measures have to be taken to solve this issue. There is a compelling argument to drop the border dispute for an agreed period of time in order to bring much more pressing issues of cross-border security to the table.

US and NATO neglect the instability in Pakistan, while Taliban and Al-Qaeda use the opportunity of instability in Pakistan by using the havens and sanctuaries in tribal areas to continue their operations in Afghanistan.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, the entry of refugees from Afghanistan into Balochistan has brought a number of problems to the area. As stated by Neill, three million refugees crossed the open border to Balochistan in the post-war era and accompanying migration into the region brought militancy and 'Kalashnikov culture'. More recently the prevalence of small arms in the society and the penetration of the region by militants have resulted in rapidly deteriorating or a complete lack of security.<sup>13</sup> It means that the cross-border issue has not only deteriorated the security situation in Afghanistan, but in the region as well.

Pakistan's military establishment has long viewed its engagement in Afghanistan largely from the context of its struggle against India. Thus India's growing presence in Afghanistan contributes to Pakistan's fears of encirclement. India's establishment of its first overseas air base in nearby Farkhor, Tajikistan has further increased such fears. Pakistan's behind-the-scenes support for the Taliban is believed to be rooted, in large part, in

its concern that India is attempting to encircle it by gaining influence in Afghanistan.

Woodward, in his book *Obama's Wars* states that in the earlier briefing of Obama, when assuming his office, Mike McConnell, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), had laid out the problem in dealing with Pakistan. "It was a dishonest partner of the US in the Afghanistan War. They are living a lie", McConnell had said. In exchange for reimbursements of about \$2 billion a year from the US, Pakistan's powerful military and its spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), gave clandestine aid, weapons and money to the Afghan Taliban. They had an "office of hedging your bets", McConnell said.<sup>14</sup>

The rise of Islamist militancy on both sides of the Durand Line also shows connection with the rise in militant capabilities in Kashmir and across the Line of Control. The Islamist militant groups supported by Pakistan, at least its clients such as, inter alia, the *Lashkar-e-Taiba* and *Hizb-ul-Mujahideen*, are well known to coordinate training, resource allocation and logistic support with groups operating out of northwest Pakistan. To look at Pakistan's cross-border concerns on the borders with India and Afghanistan, India's security and diplomatic concerns in Afghanistan are clear. India seeks to monitor Pakistan's activities within Afghanistan and, if necessary either stop them or decrease their influence.

Gates in his book *Duty* has stated that between 2002 and 2005 the Taliban reconstituted in western Pakistan and in southern and eastern Afghanistan. Headquartered and operating in Pakistani cities including Peshawar and Quetta, virtually unhindered by the Pakistani government, the Taliban recovered from their disastrous defeat and again became a serious fighting force. They received invaluable, if unintended, assistance from the sparseness of Afghan government presence outside Kabul - Karzai was referred to as the mayor of Kabul - and the corruption and incompetence of too many Afghan government officials at all levels in the provinces.<sup>15</sup>

Later in response to a question on Afghanistan, and agreement between ex-President Hamid Karzai and India for intensifying defence and security cooperation, Pakistan's National Security Advisor, Sartaj Aziz said, as far as he knew, India had been requested to help train Afghanistan's security forces. He said there must be no security support to any group inside Afghanistan, and India, Iran and others should also follow the policy of non-interference in Afghanistan's affairs.<sup>16</sup>

While many discuss a regional solution with the direct engagement of Pakistan in the peace building and reconciliation process of Afghanistan, no breakthrough is possible until Pakistan ceases and desists from its policy to subvert law and order in Afghanistan via their proxy group- the Taliban.<sup>17</sup> It seems that Pakistan will continue to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and still support the terrorist groups in their borders. But the general situation seems that the government of Pakistan, under the leadership of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif tends to have a different approach and target the safe havens of terrorists. Since it is not an easy task, there are a number of other groups like one led by Imran Khan, Chairman of Pakistan *Tehreek-e-Insaf* Party. Generally speaking, all governments in Pakistan have always had a negative strategy towards Afghanistan which affected the security situation in Afghanistan and even recently in Pakistan itself. During the post-Taliban phase, President Parwez Musharraf had little choice but to offer his whole-hearted support to the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom, given the choice George W. Bush offered him in his famous words, “that you are either with us or against us.”

At a joint press conference of the Afghan and Pakistani Presidents earlier in 2014, a Pakistani journalist raised the issue of there being some 14 Indian consulates in Afghanistan, and asked ex-President Karzai to close them down. And then in the ex- Pak Chief of Army Staff, General Ashfaq Kayani’s hacked e-mail, he said that he considered the Taliban as Pakistan’s strategic asset in Afghanistan, and mentioned about strengthening Islamabad’s support for the group. Indications of Pakistani support to the Taliban as their proxy force in Afghanistan, particularly after 2014, explains the grand strategy of Pakistan towards Afghanistan, which has continued because of a weak nation-state in Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup>

Looking back at the last ten years and even before that, many issues such as the Durand Line and Pakistan using the Taliban as proxy force in Afghanistan, besides the weak government in Afghanistan encourage Pakistan to destabilise Afghanistan. This is one of the major factors for Afghanistan lacking security in the region.

### ***3. Afghan-Iran Relationship and Water Disputes***

Iran has also interfered in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. According to reports, Iran has been supporting the insurgent groups in Afghanistan which affect the security situation in Afghanistan. Besides, the water

disputes between two countries could be the reason for Iran's interference in Afghanistan. According to a report published by RAND Corporation, Iran's military aid to the Taliban has included light arms, rifled-propelled grenades (RPGs), and even military training for Taliban forces on Iranian soil. Iran's support for Taliban insurgents has not been as extensive as its support for Shia insurgents, who inflicted thousands of casualties against U.S. forces in Iraq. Iran's military and intelligence ties with the Taliban are also much less significant than their ties with other anti-American groups such as the Lebanese *Hezbollah*.

In an article in BBC Pashto, former Afghan Chief of National Directorate of Security (NDS), Amrullah Saleh, said that Iran is following multiple policies in Afghanistan. He stated that Iran remains a major threat for the national security of the country until and unless Afghanistan becomes independent and self-sufficient. Saleh in his article further states that while Iran is keen on maintaining good relations with the government of Afghanistan, it also wants to have relations with the political parties and Shia minority groups.<sup>19</sup> He also pointed towards Iran's opposition to the presence of U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan and Iran's preparation to target U.S. military installations in the region specifically in Afghanistan during the emergency period.

The Taliban are a Sunni fundamentalist group opposed to Shia Iran. But Tehran's measured support for the Taliban may be tied to very specific goals; it could strengthen Iran's credibility with certain Taliban factions, enhance communication with the Pashtun Afghan population, and increase leverage with the Afghan central government without excessively damaging bilateral relations. It also sends a message to the United States: in the event of a military conflict, Iran has the ability to dial up the pressure against U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

Iran's support for Afghan insurgents may also be motivated by Iran's own struggle with Balochi separatist insurgents. The Sunni Baloch, residing in south-eastern Iran, along the areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan bordering Iran, are one of the most oppressed of Iran's ethnic minority groups. Even under the Shah, Iranian Balochistan was undeveloped and it resisted central authority.<sup>20</sup> As a conspiracy theory, one can say that based on whatever the Iranian government has consistently claimed, "The Baloch insurgents, including *Jundallah*, might have been supported by the United States, in addition to Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei even claimed that Iran had obtained intelligence intercepts proving U.S. complicity".<sup>21</sup> Iran providing arms and

weapons to the Taliban can be a countermeasure. It appears that Iran's military assistance has decreased in recent years. This could be due to a number of factors, including backlash from the Afghan government and growing hatred among the Afghan population because of Iranian interference in Afghan affairs. Especially the majority Sunnis in Afghanistan aren't happy with Iranian influence in Afghanistan, as the Iranian interference has been a reason for disunity between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns.

Water disputes between Iran and Afghanistan are a constant source of tension, since 19th century. Both countries, particularly Iran suffer from shortage of water. The eastern Iranian provinces bordering Afghanistan are particularly water challenged. Disputes have centred mostly on the Helmand River, which flows into the Iranian province of Sistan-Balochistan and is an important water source for populations in both countries.<sup>22</sup> The water-sharing disputes will likely remain a significant sticking point between Tehran and Kabul. Following more than a century of disputes over Helmand's water supply, Iran and Afghanistan signed an accord in 1973, which established a means of regulating each country's use of the river. The deal was not fully implemented, however, due to unrest in Afghanistan and the Iranian Revolution. According to Iranian officials, based on the 1973 Helmand treaty, Iran should receive an annual share of 820 million cubic meters from Helmand.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, Afghans and the Afghan parliament accused Iran of taking more water than it is entitled to. It seems that this could be one of the reasons for Iran's interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan which affect the security situation in Afghanistan.

The *Christian Science Monitor* published a news report detailing the financial investments made by Iran in Herat. The report contrasted the limited Iranian investment in culture and religion, with the vast amounts of money spent by NATO.<sup>24</sup> Iran and Afghanistan have a common culture, language, beliefs and values. Iran is happy that the hostile Taliban regime was overthrown in Afghanistan, but is highly sensitive to the idea of USA being so much involved in Afghanistan. Tehran seeks to counter the U.S.-led NATO mission in Afghanistan in two ways. First, it tries to counter what it terms as cultural NATO or the influence of Western political values such as freedom of speech, free media, open society, and a democratic state where the rights of citizens are protected. Secondly, Iran tries to counter American influence, by supporting anti-American elements in Afghanistan, as well as by its support of the

insurgency.<sup>25</sup>

It is somehow complicated to find out the main reason of Iran's interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. There are several reasons for Iran not supporting instability in Afghanistan but they prefer to have the security situation fragile in Afghanistan. As a close neighbour of Afghanistan, Iran's role has negatively affected the security situation in Afghanistan.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, one can understand that there are three regional factors which affected the security situation in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2014. India-Pakistan rivalry in the region has been one of the reasons. They use Afghanistan as a battlefield for their struggle due to its strategic location which has affected the security situation not only in Afghanistan but in the region as well. Pakistan's interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs by supporting the terrorist groups and the Taliban is another factor which causes security challenges in Afghanistan and in the region. Iran's role and its impact on the security situation in Afghanistan, besides the ongoing water dispute between Iran and Afghanistan, have caused security concerns in both countries, specifically in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is currently in the midst of a security transition process, which has seen the security shift from NATO-ISAF to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan through supporting the terrorist groups is one of the major problems for Afghanistan. Interestingly, Pakistan benefits by receiving money from the U.S. in the name of countering terrorism. Pakistan also uses the opportunity to wipe out the Durand Line issue.

Afghanistan has been thus deeply affected and bringing stability in this country would require a long-term effort in order to find a solution. Apart from having a weak government, the Afghan government seems to be engaged in rivalry between its own members, which has given a chance to the Taliban insurgents to increase their activities in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the neighbouring countries, such as Pakistan and Iran, in order to meet their goals in achieving their national interests, will always continue its policy of interference and adversely impact upon the security situation in Afghanistan. There is need for a fair regional cooperation which will mutually benefit Afghanistan and other countries in the region.



If Afghanistan can't solve its problems and doesn't create a politically stable state, the country will not be in a position to develop its economy and will fall back into conflict. SAARC must seriously assess whether Afghanistan, as being a member of this association, is able to provide security for itself beyond 2014 or not.<sup>26</sup> SAARC must seek solutions on how to support Afghanistan to overcome its security challenges and also determine how it can help Afghanistan in terms of security problems. SAARC mostly focuses on economic cooperation of the member states.

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# TALIBAN VERSUS ISLAMIC STATE IN AFGHANISTAN *A TURF WAR*

BINOD KUMAR SINGH

## ABSTRACT

*For a country already shaken by terrorism, the increasing presence of Islamic State (IS) in Afghanistan is a nightmare for the Afghans and many others. The IS-Taliban rivalry for Afghan hearts, minds and territory has sharply increased violence in the strife-torn country and will likely hit the ongoing peace process. Moreover, the vacuum left following confirmation of Taliban leader Mullah Omar's death will likely enable IS to expand its presence and legitimacy in Afghanistan. The Taliban are driven by local issues and limit their fighting to within their country's borders different from IS which seeks to forge a worldwide caliphate. However, the turf war between the IS and the Taliban has already begun and it is very likely it will intensify further representing the biggest challenge to the Government of President Ashraf Ghani. With civilian casualties mounting, serious questions about the effectiveness of both the new Government and security forces, and a mounting economic crisis, Afghanistan is facing some very real and daunting challenges.*

## INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan, a landlocked multi-ethnic country is located in the heart of South-Central Asia. Lying along important trade routes connecting southern and eastern Asia to Europe and the Middle East, numerous Eurasian civilizations have interacted, traded, migrated through and often fought invaders and conquerors including the Persian Empire, Alexander the Great, Muslim Arabs, Turkic peoples, the Mongols, the British Empire, and the Soviet Union.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was resisted by Afghan guerrilla forces, with covert material assistance from the United States.

The invasion also marked the beginning of the downfall of the former Soviet Union, which experienced the limits of expansionism. Once Soviet forces left Afghanistan in 1989, however, neglect by the United States and its allies in rebuilding the war-devastated country led to internal factional strife, with the Taliban eventually gaining control.<sup>1</sup>

The Taliban, a radically militant Islamic movement that controlled some 90 percent of Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001, emerged from their base in Kandahar in southwestern Afghanistan in reaction to the lawlessness caused by infighting between rival *mujahideen* forces in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal. The Taliban's declared aims included the restoration of peace, rigid enforcement of Islamic law, disarming the population and defending the Islamic character of Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup>

The Taliban perpetually announced that they were fighting merely for the world of Islam to remain transcendent. However, at the same time they emphasized that their first task was to purify the country from the stains of hypocrisy that manifested themselves in the so-called *mujahideen*. *Mujahideen* internal conflicts, which inflicted heavy damages and huge suffering on Afghanistan, provided the Taliban with a golden chance to verify their claim over the corruption and hypocrisy of their opponents.<sup>3</sup>

But the Taliban had also implemented an extreme interpretation of the Sharia or Islamic law that appalled many Afghans and Muslim world. The Taliban had closed down all girls' schools and women were rarely permitted to venture out of their homes, even for shopping. The Taliban had banned every conceivable kind of entertainment including music, TV, videos, cards, kite flying and most sports and games. The Taliban's brand of Islamic fundamentalism was so extreme that it denigrated Islam's message of peace and tolerance and its capacity to live with other religious and ethnic groups.<sup>4</sup>

Though, the Taliban made giant strides in uniting the country, ultimately it was unable to end the civil war. The strongest opposition to the Taliban came from the Northern Alliance,<sup>5</sup> who controlled the northeast region of Afghanistan. This group backed the United States-led coalition that ousted the Taliban from power in 2001 for harboring Al-Qaeda, but it has not been defeated. With an estimated core of up to 60,000 fighters<sup>6</sup>, the Taliban remains the most vigorous insurgent group in Afghanistan and holds sway over civilians near its strongholds in the country's south and east. Though the Taliban appears unlikely to dismantle the Afghan Government and revive its Emirate, it poses the most serious challenge to Kabul's authority even as the United States and North Atlantic Treaty

Organization (NATO) have withdrawn their forces from Afghanistan.<sup>7</sup>

Conspicuously, 13 years after its creation through the signing of the Bonn Agreement in Germany, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)<sup>8</sup> concluded operations in an event on December 28, 2014, transitioning to the new North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM) consisting of 12,905 troops to train, advice and assist the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF)<sup>9</sup> However, the situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate as the much larger ISAF, with 132,457 personnel at the peak as on July 26, 2011, also failed.

The burden now falls on an underprepared ANSF. Significantly, Lieutenant General Joseph Anderson, Commander of ISAF Joint Command in Afghanistan, on November 5, 2014, disclosed that 4,350 ANSF personnel were killed in action in 2013 and 4,634 in 2014.<sup>10</sup> The first half of 2015 saw a 40 percent jump in ANSF casualties, with more than 4,300 security forces personnel killed and another 8,000 wounded.<sup>11</sup> It is useful to note that, during the entire course of its combat mission since 2001, ISAF lost a total of 3,515 personnel (data till February 11, 2016).<sup>12</sup> According to Neta C. Crawford, Professor of Political Science at Boston University, 26,270 civilians have been killed by direct war violence in Afghanistan from late 2001 through 2014.<sup>13</sup> In 2015, the country recorded 2,022 civilian fatalities, according to partial data compiled by the *South Asia Terrorism Portal* (SATP). For a country already shaken by terrorism, the increasing presence of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Islamic State (IS) in Afghanistan is a nightmare for the Afghans and many others.

#### ORIGIN OF IS IN AFGHANISTAN

Reports of IS making inroads into Afghanistan had started emerging subsequent to the June 2014 release of IS 'world domination map', which included Afghanistan in the projected 'Islamic region of Khorasan'.<sup>14</sup> In Khorasan, the greater Afghanistan-Pakistan region, because of the region's historic and religious importance, IS is likely to prioritize its expansion in the region. As IS's grand strategic aim is to rule all historically Muslim lands in a Caliphate that wins an apocalyptic war with the West, fostering an affiliate in Afghanistan and Pakistan serves several of IS's strategic objectives. External affiliates' support to this objective by giving IS strategic resiliency, facilitating its military expansion outside of Iraq and Syria and legitimizing its claimed status as a trans-regional Caliphate, IS requires presence in the region in order to actualize its literal interpretation of

apocalyptic scripture. Operations in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region also enable IS directly to challenge Al-Qaeda, its rival for the leadership of the global jihadist movement contesting IS's claim to hold political and religious authority over all Muslims.<sup>15</sup>

In fact, most of the IS militants which emerged in Afghanistan are members of the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban groups. The group is gaining foothold in Afghanistan with more militants formerly fighting for other militant groups pledging allegiance, mostly, former Taliban disillusioned by the movements' unsuccessful bid to return to power in Kabul. Noticeably, the first concrete evidence of recruiting IS fighters in Afghanistan emerged after Mullah Abdul Rauf, a former Taliban commander in Helmand Province, declared his allegiance to the IS on January 11, 2015.<sup>16</sup>

Remarkably, Commander of the NATO-led RSM in Afghanistan General John Campbell in an interview with the *Army Times* on January 15, 2015, stated "We are seeing reports of some recruiting. There have been some night letter drops; there have been reports of people trying to recruit both in Afghanistan and Pakistan, quite frankly."<sup>17</sup> Confirming that a number of the Taliban militants have launched operations under the name of IS in parts of Afghanistan, Ministry of Interior (MoI) spokesman Sediq Sediqi stated on January 17, 2015, "Our intelligence information shows that a number of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants have changed the name of their group and have announced allegiance to ISIS."<sup>18</sup> Distressingly, Jowzjan Police Chief General Faqir Mohammad Jowzjani in a statement on February 11, 2015, also said that 600 Taliban militants have rebranded themselves in northern Jowzjan Province by changing their physical appearance and raising black flags in the name of *Daesh* (Arabic name of IS).<sup>19</sup>

Notably, acknowledging for the first time, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, during a press briefing on March 21, 2015, said that the IS terrorist group was gaining influence in Afghanistan.<sup>20</sup> Further, a group of Uzbeks in northern Afghanistan, claiming to be from the *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan* (IMU), on March 30, 2015, pledged its allegiance to the IS group. A person calling himself Sadulla Urgenji said that the IMU no longer views Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar as leader since he has not been seen for some 13 years and according to Shari'a he can no longer be leader. Urgenji said his group was recognizing the authority of the Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of the IS group.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, on August 7, 2015, in a video statement, the IMU's leader Usmon Ghazi

took an oath of allegiance to IS and its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.<sup>22</sup>

Adding to the complexity of the situation in Afghanistan, *Hezb-e Islami* (HeI), a powerful Islamist political party and militant faction within the country, on July 6, 2015, publicly endorsed IS with the group's founder and leader, former Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, urging followers to support IS. While Hekmatyar's fighters have mostly been an afterthought in the NATO occupation of Afghanistan, launching occasional attacks and being occasionally courted by the Afghan Government, they remain a meaningfully large faction and could give IS in Afghanistan a shot in the arm in trying to establish itself.<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, the IS group has benefited from Taliban infighting following Taliban founder Mullah Omar's death confirmation. Amid deepening rift among the Taliban leadership following Mullah Omar's death confirmation, the IS group on August 4, 2015, claimed breakthrough in its efforts to gain a foothold in the country. A spokesman for the terror group in Khorasan Province claimed that pledges of allegiance to IS are taking place across the country. The IS-affiliate also claimed that the Taliban movement is over and said the dawn of the IS begins.<sup>24</sup>

Surprisingly, the affiliates of IS in Afghanistan on September 8, 2015, claimed that the senior Taliban commander Mullah Mansoor Dadullah has pledged allegiance to the terror group. An IS supporter who claims to be spokesman for the terror group said that Mullah Dadullah was rescued from an offensive by the Taliban militants involving 2,100 fighters in southern Zabul Province. He said at least 230 IS fighters were deployed to Zabul Province from western Farah Province to engage the Taliban militants and rescue Mullah Dadullah. He also claimed that Mullah Abdul Manan, the brother of Mullah Omar, prefers to join the IS group rather than pledging allegiance to the newly appointed Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor.<sup>25</sup>

Further, accusing the Taliban of working with neighboring Pakistan's spy agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and of protecting shrines deemed un-Islamic, a man identifying himself as Abu Yasir Al-Afghani of IS declared on December 7, 2015, "For those who wanted right from the Taliban, come to Islamic State, before they make you and the Afghan Army one entity in the name of nationalism. My message to the Muslims of people of the Province of Khorasan and to those youth who are fighting in the ranks of the Taliban is that, the door of the Islamic State is open for you."<sup>26</sup>

Startlingly, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), a British defense

and security think tank, on February 5, 2016, revealed that there are around 7,000–8,500 *Daesh* members based on Afghan soil and 2,000–3,000 based in Pakistan.<sup>27</sup> The figures are inclusive of all active *Daesh* members, both fighters and support elements from different sources including *Daesh* cadres themselves, Afghan security sources, Pakistani security sources and Iranian security sources.

#### PAKISTAN FORAGE

IS, in an effort to extend its global reach, also exploited the rivalries of the *Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP) to its advantage and wade into the region. In fact, the TTP had also been beset by bitter internal rivalries over the past years, with the influential Mehsud tribal faction of the group refusing to accept the authority of TTP Chief Mullah Fazlluah, who came to power in late 2013. In 2014, the TTP saw at least six instances of fragmentation.<sup>28</sup> On October 4, 2014, six top commanders of the TTP, including spokesman Shahidullah Shahid, announced their first allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Shaidullah Shahid in a statement issued in Arabic and Urdu said “I am confirming my allegiance to Amirul Momineen Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and would abide by all his decisions, whatever is the order, and whatsoever the circumstances; I shall be loyal to him and obey his orders.”<sup>29</sup> Another group of mid-level TTP commanders and officials in a nearly 17-minute video on January 10, 2015, again pledged allegiance to the IS and recognized Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as Commander of the Faithful and the Caliph of Muslims.<sup>30</sup> Security Forces in Pakistan also believe that *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* (LeJ), an anti-Shia terror group is collaborating with IS as LeJ’s agenda perfectly matches the ideological stance of the anti-Shia IS.

Outstandingly, blaming Pakistan for the growing insecurity in Afghanistan, Fazal Ahmad Shirzad, Police Chief of Nangarhar Province on September 30, 2015, said that Pakistan’s spy agency ISI is leading the *Daesh* militant group in his Province. He said that 90 per cent fighters of the group are Pakistani nationals.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Afghan Minister of Interior Noor-ul-Haq Olomi during November 2, 2015 session of the *Wolesi Jirga* (Lower House of Parliament) said, “*Daesh* enjoys the same safe heavens Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Haqqani and other terrorist groups were using. They are in the service of the same elements. Command of the fight is not in the hands of local militant commanders; behind them are experienced military personnel. The final word is that Pakistan continues to support terrorists.”<sup>32</sup>



Likewise, Afghanistan's Ambassador to Pakistan Janan Mosazai while talking to a seminar in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, on January 14, 2016, said that about 60 to 70 per cent militants who have fled Mohmand and Orakzai agencies in the tribal built have crossed the border into Afghanistan and joined *Daesh*.<sup>33</sup> Mohmand Agency shares border with Kunar and Nangarhar Provinces from where they enter into Afghan territory. Orakzai Agency does not have a border with Afghanistan but militants in this area use the bordered Kurram and Khyber agencies as their routes to reach to Afghanistan.

Surprisingly, *Khaama Press*, in a report published on February 8, 2016, said that 11 Taliban commanders, who have recently abandoned Pakistan due to the inappropriate behavior by the country, during a gathering somewhere in the western Farah Province of Afghanistan, blamed Pakistan's interference as the main cause of issues in Afghanistan. One of the Taliban commanders said the ongoing interference of Pakistan in internal affairs of Afghanistan is the main problem in the country, they urged the Taliban leaders to free themselves from the monopoly of Pakistan, accusing it of deception.<sup>34</sup>

#### IS ACTIVITIES IN AFGHANISTAN

The loyalists of IS group have been using the recruitment tactics of Taliban in Afghanistan, but their way of execution is more horrible than the Taliban. In fact, IS supporters have proved ruthless, reportedly beheading several Taliban fighters. On June 3, 2015, 10 Taliban militants were beheaded by the IS affiliates in Achin District of Nangarhar Province.<sup>35</sup> On June 13, 2015, IS terrorist group released a video which purportedly shows the beheading of a Taliban member identified as Saad Imarati, who reportedly switched allegiance from IS back to the Taliban.<sup>36</sup> On July 14, 2015, another video was released which purportedly shows the beheading of an alleged spy in Ghani Khel District of eastern Nangarhar Province for providing information regarding the group's locations by carrying a tracking device for drones.<sup>37</sup> On January 7, 2016, the loyalists of IS terrorist group beheaded seven people including six Taliban insurgents, one Afghan National Army (ANA) soldier in Achin District of Nangarhar Province shortly after the Friday prayers. The local residents were also forced to gather in the area to watch the beheadings.<sup>38</sup>

The IS affiliates have also persecuted Hazaras and Shias in Afghanistan. On February 23, 2015, a group of armed masked men

stopped vehicles traveling on the Kabul-Kandahar highway in Zabul Province and abducted 30 Hazara passengers.<sup>39</sup> Though no group immediately claimed responsibility for the abductions nor demanded ransom, Deputy Police Chief in Zabul Province Ghulam Jilani Farahi on February 24, 2015, told that militants of the IS were behind the abductions.<sup>40</sup> Zabul was the first Province in Afghanistan where the presence of IS fighters was reported. Separately, on March 15, 2015, 10 more passengers belonging to Hazara ethnic minority were abducted from Ghazni Province while the passengers were traveling from Jaghori District to the Ghazni city.<sup>41</sup> On November 8, 2015, seven Hazaras including two women and a child were beheaded by suspected IS militants in the southern Province of Zabul. They were abducted on October 1, 2015, from Rasani village in the Gelan District of the neighboring Ghazni Province.<sup>42</sup>

Remarkably, in the first major attack claimed by the IS and the first-ever IS suicide attack in Afghanistan, on April 18, 2015, 35 people were killed and more than 100 others were injured in a bomb blast in Jalalabad city of Nangahar Province.<sup>43</sup> Mohammad Mohaqiq, the Second Deputy to Chief Executive Officer, in an interview on July 21, 2015, said that the IS terrorist group has started recruitments in the outskirts of Kabul Province. Mohaqiq said based on the information they have received, the IS recruits are receiving salaries upto \$1,000 along with a motorcycle. He said the group has so far recruited around 700 to 800 fighters in the country and warned that the group poses a serious threat to Afghanistan.<sup>44</sup>

Aiming to gain a foothold in Afghanistan, the IS loyalists on September 9, 2015, vowed to eliminate the Durand Line, the 2,250 kilometer long border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, in a bid to unite and pave the way for the Muslims divided by the line. A spokesman for the terror group's self-proclaimed Khorasan Province said the IS eye to destroy the borders as they did between Iraq and Syria. In the meantime, affiliates of the terror group have doubled efforts to encourage the dissident high level Taliban commanders to join the IS group in a bid to further gain foothold in the country. The spokesman for the terror group said that a delegation of prominent scholars has been sent by the group's Khorasan Province chief to Uruzgan Province to meet with the senior Taliban leader Mullah Mansoor Dadullah.<sup>45</sup>

In fact, Nangarhar Province has become a hot spot for the newly emerged group of terrorists. The group has been operating in at least seven Districts of this Province. Besides Achin, the group has been operating in Chaparhar, Kot, Bati Kot, Ghanikhel, Dih Bala, and Nazyan Districts.

The expansion of *Daesh* in this eastern Province has not only prompted actions from Government but also awakened former Jihadi commanders and community elders of the eastern region.<sup>46</sup> Particularly, Achin District Governor, Haji Ghalib on September 10, 2015, said that *Daesh* militants have so far killed as many as 600 people over the past four months in Achin District and they have also been running three private prisons in Achin District.<sup>47</sup>

In the meantime, according to United Nations Al-Qaida Monitoring Team's report released on September 25, 2015, around 70 militants of the IS terrorist group are busy in forming the core of the group's branch in Afghanistan. The report said "Sightings of the groups with some form of ISIL branding or sympathy were reported in 25 of Afghanistan's 34 Provinces." According to the report the IS loyalists and the Taliban militants are fighting each other only in eastern Nangarhar Province, citing the drug trade as the main reason behind the brutal clashes. The report also added that militants from Pakistan and Uzbekistan with some of them having close ties to Al-Qaeda terrorist network have come under the IS banner after fleeing their country and have "rebranded themselves" in recent months.<sup>48</sup>

Disturbingly, the IS group is now focusing on brainwashing the youth and indoctrinate them with radical ideologies. Haji Azim Khan, a tribal elder in Achin District of Nangarhar Province stated in an interview on September 17, 2015, that IS terrorist group has started forced recruitment of young men and children to fight for the group. The IS loyalists were also going from house to house to identify young women and girls and forcing marriages on them.<sup>49</sup> Further, a report published by *Al Jazeera* on November 1, 2015, stated that *Al Jazeera* visited two bases of IS in eastern Kunar Province and talked to IS militants including child soldiers who have stated their readiness to become suicide bombers. The fighters said that they are gaining territory from Afghanistan's largest armed group, the Taliban. And in areas under IS control, young children are being trained to become fighters and suicide bombers.<sup>50</sup>

Once again, the harrowing fact regarding the use of kids as new recruits in Afghanistan has been revealed in a news documentary, *ISIS in Afghanistan*, prepared by journalist Najibullah Quraishi and premiered on November 17, 2015, in *Frontline*. In the documentary he had shown footage of militants training children as young as three years in the terror tactics used by the group. The trainings included use of pistols, AK-47 assault rifles and hand grenades which were provided by ISIS instructors

to children between 13 to 14 years of age in the restive eastern Kunar Province.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, committing the fanatic acts in a bid to match the atrocities committed by the terror group in Iraq and Syria, the IS loyalists operating under the brand of 'Wilayat Khurasan', purportedly on November 21, 2015, showed destroying raised graves.<sup>52</sup>

Commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, General John F. Campbell during an interview with the *Associated Press* at his office in RSM headquarters in Kabul, on December 15, 2015, said that supporters of the IS group in Afghanistan are attempting to establish a regional base in the eastern city of Jalalabad, Nangarhar's Provincial capital. He said there were also "indications" that the IS supporters in Nangarhar were trying to consolidate links with the group's leadership in Syria and Iraq. Campbell said the group wants to establish a base in Nangarhar's Provincial capital, Jalalabad as the base of the Khorasan Province and work their way up into Kunar Province immediately north.<sup>53</sup>

Recently, the loyalists of IS terrorist group have launched a radio station *Caliphate Radio* in eastern Nangarhar Province with an aim to encourage local youth to enroll in jihadi ranks and airing anti-Government Islamic rulings or *fatwa* using a broadcast band of 90 FM.<sup>54</sup> Increasingly concerned by the 90-minute daily Pashto language 'Voice of the Caliphate' broadcast consisting mainly of interviews, messages and songs about IS, Ahmad Ali Hazrat, Head of the Provincial Council in Nangarhar Province on December 22, 2015 said, "Most of our people are jobless and this radio will encourage lots of people to join their ranks. Now *Daesh* are seven kilometers outside Jalalabad city and if the Government doesn't act soon it will expand its broadcast and recruit even from Kabul."<sup>55</sup> In addition to Pashto broadcasts, residents and civil society activists on January 27, 2016, said that the IS group has started airing programmes in Dari language in eastern Nangarhar Province.<sup>56</sup>

Further, *Voice of America* on January 21, 2016, reported the expansion of the IS group in Ghazni Province as the group has been busy in its campaign in Ghazni Province's restive areas including Zana Khan, Giro, Andar and Gilan Districts. Militants wearing black clothes have been seen in these areas urging locals to join *Daesh*. They have also distributed night letters as part of their campaign. General Aminullah Amarkhil, Police Chief of Ghazni Province also confirmed the report saying that *Daesh* is operating in a number of restive Districts including Giro.<sup>57</sup> *Voice of America* on February 8, 2016, further revealed that armed men associating themselves with *Daesh* have been seen in Achin, Naziyan and Dehbala

Districts of eastern Nangarhar Province cutting trees with the imported machines for smuggling to Pakistan. Malak Afsar, a tribal elder in Achin District said that “the government has done nothing in this regard. Timber is transported to market by locals who work as middlemen for IS.”<sup>58</sup>

### TALIBAN CHALLENGING IS IN AFGHANISTAN

Both Taliban and IS group oppose each other. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of IS has called Taliban leader Mullah Omar “a fool and illiterate warlord” saying that Mullah Omar does not deserve a spiritual or political credibility. On the other hand Taliban fighters have been ordered by their leaders not to let *Daesh* flag raise in Afghanistan. Nabi Jan Mullahkhil, Police chief of southern Helmand Province, during an interview on April 20, 2015, told *Mashaal Radio*, the Pakistan wing of *Radio Free Europe*, that both the Taliban and *Daesh* have officially declared *Jihad* (Holy War) against one another.<sup>59</sup>

Further, warning the leader of the IS group against waging a parallel insurgency in Afghanistan, in an open letter addressed to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi signed by the Taliban deputy leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor published in three languages Arabic, Dari and Pashto, on June 16, 2015, the militant group stated that “The Islamic Emirate (Taliban) does not consider the multiplicity of jihadi ranks beneficial either for jihad or for Muslims. Your decisions taken from a distance will result in (the IS) losing support of religious scholars, *mujahideen*... and in order to defend its achievements the Islamic Emirate will be forced to react.”<sup>60</sup>

To combat rival IS group, Taliban has formed Special Forces called “Reserve Units”.<sup>61</sup> The two groups have engaged in a number of skirmishes in recent months as IS looks to expand its influence to Afghanistan. Some major incidents are as follows:

February 11, 2016: 80 militants were killed in clashes between the loyalists of IS and Taliban in Gomal District of Paktika Province as Taliban opposed *Daesh* commanders who were planning to open offices in the area.<sup>62</sup>

February 10, 2016: Six militants including five of IS group and one from Taliban group were killed and 10 others were wounded in a clash erupted between two rival insurgent groups in Karkani area of Achin District in Nangarhar Province.<sup>63</sup>

January 14, 2016: Eight militants including six fighters of *Daesh* and

two others from Taliban were killed in clashes of militants loyal to *Daesh* and Taliban in Haska Mina District of Nangarhar Province.<sup>64</sup>

January 8, 2016: 16 militants including 13 fighters of *Daesh* and three from Taliban were killed in clashes in Chaparhar District of Nangarhar District.<sup>65</sup>

January 6, 2016: 18 militants belonging to *Daesh* group were killed and a number of others wounded in a clash with Taliban in Bati Kot District of Nangarhar Province.<sup>66</sup>

Splendidly, calling on the Government to take immediate actions to tackle the activities of the militant groups, local tribal elders and political leaders representing eastern Provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Nuristan and Laghman during a gathering in capital Kabul on September 6, 2015, warned the Government regarding the deteriorating security situation in eastern Provinces.<sup>67</sup>

#### PROSPECTS OF IS IN AFGHANISTAN

IS' entry into Afghanistan has prompted comparisons with the Taliban. Both are Sunni insurgent groups with an obscurantist outlook and use barbaric methods, including beheading against their enemies. Both maintain armies, have governance structures and focus on holding territory. However, sharp differences separate them. IS is a Salafi group,<sup>68</sup> with a global jihadi agenda, whose thought "Caliphate" includes Muslim countries as well as countries in Europe that were once under Muslim rule. Its members are well-educated and while they are mostly Arab, several thousand Muslim jihadists from Western countries have joined. In contrast, the Taliban's ambitions are not global but more locally focused, that is to set up a "pure and clean Islamic state in Afghanistan." It is largely a Hanafi group,<sup>69</sup> whose leaders and foot soldiers alike are Afghan, Pashtun, rural and poorly educated. And unlike the Sunni-Shia sectarian conflict that drives IS, the Taliban insurgency emerged in the context of a largely ethnic conflict but has now focused for over a decade on fighting the U.S.-led coalition forces and the Afghan Government.<sup>70</sup>

Spectacularly, the rise of IS in Iraq, Syria, Libya and elsewhere has triggered expectations of similar growth in Afghanistan. However, its future in the country will likely be less smooth as it can expect a fierce challenge from the Taliban. The IS-Taliban relationship in Afghanistan will be adversarial not only because their composition, ideologies and goals are different but also neither side is open to subordination to the other. In

Syria, Iraq and elsewhere, IS collaborates with local groups on the condition that they work under its leadership. However, this is unlikely to happen in Afghanistan as Afghans in general and the Taliban in particular are averse to operating with foreigners, much less under them.<sup>71</sup>

Notably, Akhilesh Pillalamarri, Assistant Editor at the *National Interest*, on June 21, 2015, gave five reasons why the IS can't prevail in Afghanistan. First, the Taliban has managed to retain a numerical advantage against the IS in Afghanistan. Second, the Taliban have managed to blunt the Wahhabi-Salafist ideological appeal of the IS. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the Taliban are deeply rooted in the local tribal culture of the region and are for nationalistic reasons. Fourth, the Taliban have begun to learn to be largely pragmatic in order to increase their support base, especially among the Shia minority of Afghanistan, which cannot be said of IS. Fifth, Pakistan, which has consistently supported, if not coordinated and controlled the Afghan Taliban, will never allow their ally to be defeated and replaced by the IS.<sup>72</sup>

To add to all of the above, there is reason to believe that the brutal methods of IS are too extreme even for the Taliban. So, for now, the prospect of an IS takeover or even substantial presence in Afghanistan is far from becoming reality.<sup>73</sup> Amid concerns that the loyalists of IS group are gaining foothold in Afghanistan, Nicholas Haysom, who once served as the UN Secretary-General's deputy special representative in Afghanistan in an interview on December 29, 2015, said, "At the moment ISIS is not the most significant aspect of the security threat facing Afghanistan and its presence is relatively limited. In my view, I've seen reports that they are widely spread, I think they are exaggerated and scaremongering."<sup>74</sup>

Of late, signs of cracks have also been experienced in the lines of Khorasan group of the IS. Mawlawi Abdul Rahim Muslim Dost who is a senior commander of the IS's Khorasan region and among the first ones who pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has separated ways with Hafiz Saeed Khan, the chief of IS-Khorasan region. Mawlawi Muslim Dost accused Hafiz Saeed Khan of "killing, arresting and insulting people" in violation of Islamic principles.<sup>75</sup>

Moreover, IS's chance of making headway in Afghanistan is especially uncertain given it has launched from the south, the traditional stronghold of the Taliban which holds a virtual monopoly there on anti-state operations. Further complicating IS's possible efforts to gain ground in the south, and especially Helmand, is the drug trade, with Helmand

being the largest hub of drug production in Afghanistan. Almost all circles and factions in Afghanistan are involved in the drugs business, including the Taliban. The Taliban, in the past, have shown they will fight tooth and nail for control of the smuggling routes and production hubs of drugs.<sup>76</sup>

### GOVERNMENT ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

In the first known military operation undertaken against the IS in Afghanistan, Abdul Rauf Khadem, the founder of the Afghan branch of IS was killed by a drone strike along with five of his companions in Helmand Province on February 9, 2015.<sup>77</sup> Following the killing of Mullah Abdul Rauf, his nephew Hafiz Wahidi took over the command for IS who was also killed along with nine of his companions in Helmand Province on March 16, 2015 during an Afghan National Army (ANA) operation.<sup>78</sup> Further, on July 11, 2015, IS leader in Afghanistan and Pakistan Hafiz Saeed was killed along with 30 other insurgents in a U.S. drone strike on their compound in the Achin District of Nangarhar Province.<sup>79</sup> Some of the airstrikes are as follows:

February 8, 2016: 11 fighters of IS were killed and two others wounded in an air strike in Bazaar of Achin District in eastern Nangarhar Province.<sup>80</sup>

February 6, 2016: 16 Pakistani militants affiliated with IS were killed in two separate airstrikes in Batikot and Achin Districts of eastern Nangarhar Province.<sup>81</sup>

February 1, 2016: 29 IS militants including five operators of radio run by the terrorist group of IS were killed in an air strike conducted in Achin District of eastern Nangarhar Province.<sup>82</sup>

January 24, 2016: 17 loyalists of IS were killed in drone strikes in Deh Bala and Achin Districts of eastern Nangarhar Province. 13 militants of the group were killed in Deh Bala District and four others in Achin District.<sup>83</sup>

Ordering the Ministry of Defense (MoD) to continue bombing the fanatics of the IS, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani during his speech at a gathering organized in Jalalabad city of Nangarhar Province, on January 10, 2016, said “*Daesh* does not have room in our territory. We want them killed.”<sup>84</sup> Separately, warning that IS affiliates in Afghanistan are trying to finance their operations through the illegal exploitation of Afghan minerals, much similar to what the self-proclaimed Caliphate did



with oil in Iraq and Syria, Minister of Mines and Petroleum, Daud Shah Saba stated on June 12, 2015: "The presence and activities of *Daesh* are a new security challenge for us, because *Daesh* is looking for ways to access economic resources. The mines of Afghanistan can be a good economic source for this group. The activities of this group create insecurities; for example, we have 339 contracts, and we cannot monitor over 100 of them due to security challenges."<sup>85</sup> Afghanistan is estimated to have \$3 trillion in mineral deposits.

Further, President Ashraf Ghani, in an exclusive interview with *Russia Today* on July 12, 2015, stated that, "If Al-Qaeda was terrorism version one; *Daesh* is terrorism version six. The organizational form is totally modern. The means of communication deployed, the networking, the recruitment through the internet, the morphology involved is very rapid."<sup>86</sup> Urging the Government to immediately block signals of radio operated by the IS group in eastern Nangarhar Province, the lawmakers in *Meshrano Jirga* (Upper House of Parliament) on December 22, 2015, said that Government needs to take all measures against the radio even if it needs to get assistance of the regional countries.<sup>87</sup>

Earlier, warning that the rise of *Daesh* extremists in Afghanistan would threaten neighboring Russia and China, former Afghan President Hamid Karzai in an interview with *Russia Today* on June 12, 2015, said "If you hear ever in the coming days, or months, or years that *Daesh* is on the rise in Afghanistan, and is strong and expanding militarily, it will mean that it is a foreign-backed force intending to destabilize the region, particularly Central Asia, China and Russia."<sup>88</sup>

Astonishingly, extending sanctions against the Taliban for 18 months in a resolution on December 21, 2015, the U.N. Security Council warned of the increasing presence of affiliates of the IS group in Afghanistan.<sup>89</sup> Outstandingly, Russia, in a bid to exchange information with the Taliban group in fight against IS group in Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, President Vladimir Putin's special envoy on Afghanistan on December 23, 2015, said "We have communication channels opened for sharing information."<sup>90</sup> Elsewhere, the United States on January 14, 2016, designated the Khorasan branch of the IS as a terrorist organization.<sup>91</sup>

Remarkably, to suppress the IS loyalists as they were rapidly gaining foothold in different parts of the country, acting Afghan Defense Minister, Masoom Stanikzai, on January 7, 2016, announced that a new special force has been formed to counter the insurgency and threats posed by the terror group.<sup>92</sup> On January 16, 2016, nearly one thousand militiamen led

by Deputy House Speaker Zahir Qadir were placed under the ANSF control in a bid to re-organize them.<sup>93</sup> Finally, President Ashraf Ghani at a meeting with the US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter during his two-day state visit to Switzerland on January 23, 2016, said that the counter-terrorism operations to IS terrorist group are successfully and effectively being conducted in Nangarhar Province.<sup>94</sup>

### CONCLUSION

IS entry into Afghanistan is complicating the already complex conflict in the country. The main casualty of the IS-Taliban rivalry will likely be the ongoing peace process. Moreover, Taliban leaders who may be considering engaging in talks will now think twice before heading to the negotiation table as Taliban fighters and leaders who are opposed to talks with the Government could defect to IS. In addition, a sharp increase in violence in the strife-torn country can be expected as the Taliban and the IS battle for Afghan hearts, minds and territory.

Further, the vacuum left following confirmation of Taliban leader Mullah Omar's death will likely enable IS to expand its presence and legitimacy in Afghanistan as it will likely heighten efforts to recruit and build strength. As IS also enjoys the allegiance of other jihadi leaders in eastern Afghanistan and Pakistan's tribal areas, IS will likely expand its operations and attacks on major cities in Afghanistan in order to gain further support. Moreover, there is continuing risk posed by Pakistan's military operations along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border as splinter factions searching for support may consequently form or strengthen ties with international organizations such as IS.

With civilian casualties mounting and a mounting economic crisis, Afghanistan is facing some very real and daunting challenges. Afghanistan will continue to need the support of the international community as Afghanistan Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah proposing a regional action plan to combat terrorism at the Counter-Terrorism Conference in Jaipur, capital of the Indian state of Rajasthan on February 2, 2016, said "We are effectively facing a regional cold war where terrorism has become the principal instrument of projecting influence by some states against others. As a consequence, there is no universal appreciation of the grave danger, which terrorism poses to regional stability and international peace and security. That is why to be effective, I propose that each region assess the set of threats terrorism poses to their security and development

and then agree to draft and implement a joint a counter-terrorism action plan."<sup>95</sup>

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# AFGHANISTAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PAKISTAN, 2001-2017

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## INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan-Pakistan relations have always been characterized as obscurant in political terms. Despite sharing several things in common like geography, history, religion and ethnicity, the state of hostility has existed between the two countries. In 1893, the Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman Khan signed a treaty with Sir Mortimer Durand, a British diplomat and civil servant of British India in order to fix the limits of British spheres of influence and improve diplomatic relations and trade. Known as Durand treaty, it led to the creation of a new province North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).<sup>1</sup> Now it is known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a province of Pakistan which includes the Frontier Regions, which came under the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).<sup>2</sup> Durand Line has never been officially recognized by the Afghan government. Its existence led to political tension between the two countries ever since the birth of Pakistan. Aimal Faizi, spokesman for the Afghan President described, the Durand Line as “an issue of historical importance for Afghanistan. The Afghan people, not the government, can take a final decision on it”.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly the Afghan and Pakistan foreign policy is related to this issue. On 30 September 1947, Afghan delegation declared at the UN Geneva Assembly that “Afghanistan does not wish to oppose the membership of Pakistan in this great organization, but it is with the deepest regret that we are unable at this time to vote for Pakistan. This unhappy circumstance is due to the fact that we cannot recognize the North-West Frontier as part of Pakistan (NWFP) so long as the people of

the (NWFP) have not been given an opportunity free from any kind of influence to determine for themselves". Therefore, the Durand Line forms the back bone of Afghanistan's foreign policy toward Pakistan. This article seeks to examine Afghanistan's foreign policy towards Pakistan during the period 2001-17.

#### PASHTUNISTAN ISSUE

After partition in 1947, Afghanistan government got an opportunity to reclaim the lands, which were lost to British India as result of Durand agreement in 1893. The issue of Pashtunistan<sup>4</sup> became significant for Afghanistan after partition of Indian sub-continent in 1947. Afghanistan thought it convenient to take up the Pashtunistan issue, as it could fruitfully be exploited to denounce the treaty of 1893, and also to assert claims to a new international frontier (perhaps reaching as far as even the Arabian Sea). Immediately after the British transfer of power in 1947, Afghanistan encouraged armed tribal incursions into Pakistani territory, particularly the tribal areas. These raids were a constant irritant that complicated Pakistan's defense calculus on its eastern border with India, particularly at the time of partition. Pakistani military was too weak to face an Afghan and Indian threat simultaneously. The emergence of the Pashtunistan issue was a significant political development in Afghanistan in post-World War II period. During the war propaganda, the idea of the return of lost territories appealed to both the young members of the royal family, such as King Muhammad Zahir Shah and his powerful cousin Sardar Muhammad Daoud Khan, and to some nationalist intellectuals in Afghanistan. The issue of reclaiming Pashtunistan had a tremendous influence on both domestic and foreign politics, eventually drawing Afghanistan into the Cold War. In June 1947, Afghanistan government had called for an independent Pashtunistan and two years later in 1949, Afghanistan's parliament declared that it did not recognize the legality of Durand Line.<sup>5</sup> In 1947 the Pashtuns of India had asked for a referendum to enable them to choose between India and Pakistan. Indian National Congress had also proposed that they should allow voting for independence as well, but it was rejected by the British. Afghanistan also proposed two more alternatives to be offered in the referendum, accession to Afghanistan and independence but it was also denied. On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1947, the Pashtun leader Mohammad Aslam Khan Khattak, assured the Indian political leader Jawaharlal Nehru that "we have never thought of joining



Afghanistan and we have also learnt for the first time that the Afghan Government has officially approached the Government of India. We have been placed in an unenviable position. Naturally, the Afghan government is taking advantage of it and exploiting the situation". The outcome of the referendum was that Pashtuns became citizens of Pakistan.<sup>6</sup>

In 1955, the One Unit Scheme came into force in Pakistan to consolidate the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and (NWFP) into single political unit of West Pakistan. This was done to have electoral parity with the more populous province of Bengal, then East Pakistan. The scheme was unpopular in Pakistan, as it denied Bengal its demographic majority and consolidated Punjabi domination over the smaller provinces. This scheme raised tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan once again. It was claimed, that the scheme was to integrate the Pashtun area effectively into Pakistan. Riots broke out in front of Pakistani Embassy in Kabul and its Consulate in Jalalabad. Simultaneously border clash occurred between the two countries. The seriousness of the situation in 1955 can be gauged by the fact that Afghanistan mobilized over 70,000 reserves on the border, expecting a strong military response from Pakistan. The situation also precipitated another border closure that lasted five months.<sup>7</sup> Whereas the US mediated, but the former USSR supported the idea of Pashtunistan. After a short period of time political relations resumed normally and even got better during the 1965 and 1971 wars fought between Pakistan and India, when Afghanistan provided both logistic and martial support to Pakistan, which remained unacknowledged by Pakistan.

In July 1973, the monarchy was overthrown by King's cousin Daoud Khan, who became Afghanistan's first President. Daoud Khan initially aligned himself with the Communists.<sup>8</sup> Daoud Khan came to power by a military coup in Kabul with the support of Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). It was bad news for Islamabad because Daoud Khan was known to be hostile to Pakistan showing interest in Pashtunistan. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the charismatic Prime Minister of Pakistan tried to maintain friendly relationship with Afghanistan, and Pakistan recognized Daoud Khan's government. But Daoud Khan believed that the King had not sufficiently exploited Pakistan's military and political weakness to its advantage, particularly after the loss of East Pakistan in 1971.<sup>9</sup> Daoud Khan even went a step further and helped the freedom fighters of Baluchistan to establish training camps inside Afghanistan.

In 1976, there was another escalation, prompting the deployment of

Afghan forces in anticipation of a Pakistani attack.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, Islamabad raised and supported Islamist group against Daoud Khan's regime. It was Bhutto, who decided to arm and use Islamists against Daoud Khan. Furthermore, Bhutto calculated that there would be a power vacuum in Kabul upon the death of ailing and aged Daoud Khan and having Islamist allies would serve Pakistan well in influencing a post-Daoud order. Pakistan supported the unsuccessful *foco-style* Islamist uprising in 1975 against the perceived un-Islamic communist influence in Daoud Khan's government. In April 1978, Daoud Khan was assassinated in Kabul during the Saur revolution with the Communist troops shooting him to death as he tried to hide behind a pillar in Gul Khana Palace.<sup>11</sup> Now a new phase started in Afghanistan's political history.

#### COMMUNIST PERIOD

In 1978, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), with the help of the Afghan National Army seized power from Daoud Khan. Before establishing civilian government, Afghan National Army Air Corps colonel Abdul Qadir was the *de facto* head of Afghanistan for three days, starting from 27 April 1978. Qadir was eventually replaced by Nur Muhammad Taraki. PDPA established the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, which lasted until 1987. Now the role of USSR became much more significant in this period, until the Soviet army intervened in Afghanistan directly in 1979. To quote Bezhan, "Soviet Union was main backer of Pashtunistan. For the Soviet Union, support for the Pashtunistan issue would further its regional ambitions. Soviet involvement was a means of both establishing a closer relationship with Afghanistan's ruling class, and playing a significant role in the country's economic and political development".<sup>12</sup> After National Reconciliation talks in 1987, the official name of the country was reverted to Republic of Afghanistan (as it was known prior to the PDPA coup of 1978). The Republic lasted until 1992 under the leadership of Najibullah. In 1978 there were calls for an independent Pashtunistan with a view to garnering the support of nationalist Pashtuns from the other side of Durand line and winning over the conservative tribes along the Pakistani border who were reluctant to back the new regime.<sup>13</sup> Pakistan claimed that Afghan intelligence services supported acts of terrorism in the NWFP as well as the small nationalist Pashtun movement in the region. Pakistan hugely benefited from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. As Hilali has put it, "Before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979,

Pakistan was relatively isolated internationally and its relation with the United States was at lowest ebb. The country was not a priority area for the US administration because of its undemocratic system, its violations of human rights, and its effort to acquire a nuclear weapon capability. However, the Afghan crisis dramatically altered the US administration's policy toward Pakistan, and it became a most important country in the changed circumstances".<sup>14</sup>

In January 1992, when the Russian government ended its aid to the Najibullah government, the Mujahideen were still supported by Pakistan. Finally Najibullah resigned and handed over power to the seven man council to pave way for peaceful transition. And it was the end of communist party in Afghanistan. Different military groups from different ethnic groups entered Kabul for sharing political power and forming coalition government. But unfortunately the coalition between them did not last longer and civil war started in Afghanistan which devastated the country Pakistan used this opportunity to interfere in Afghanistan.

#### MUJAHIDEEN

In 1992, when the communist regime fell in Kabul, Pakistani politicians hoped to have a friendly regime in Afghanistan. But it turned out that all Mujahideen groups were not loyal to Pakistan, which led Pakistan to create the Taliban for achieving its political aims in Afghanistan. Due to lack of unity among *Mujahideen*, the civil war immediately broke out between different *Mujahideen* groups for gaining power in the country, which completely changed the political situation in Afghanistan, and provided the opportunity to other countries to be involved in Afghanistan. "The Sunni Pashtun Islamists were backed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia; Iran supported the Shia Hazaras and also Persian speaking Sunni Tajiks. Uzbeks and Turkmens received support from their counterparts in the neighboring Central Asia".<sup>15</sup>

The civil war left Afghanistan in a state of disarray, It facilitated the establishment of training camps to bolster the *Jihad* in Kashmir. It did little to advance Pakistan's aspirations in Central Asia. The main reason for the emergence of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan was the fragmentation of *Mujahideen* and their rivalry. In 1994, the Taliban surrounded Kandhar and Pakistan government backed this new militant group to obtain a certain level of stability in its neighboring country, and at the same time use them to install their own puppet government in

Afghanistan. The Taliban leadership claimed that they came to rescue the Afghans from civil war and establish an Islamic state based on Sharia. For Pakistan, Afghanistan was a buffer state to confront India. Pakistan believed that by installing Taliban in Afghanistan, they will cut the tie between India and Afghanistan. Thus they fully supported the Taliban by providing arms and millions of dollars to occupy Afghanistan.

#### TALIBAN

In 1992, a village Mullah named Mohammed Omar organized a new armed movement with the backing of Pakistan. This movement came to be known as the Taliban (meaning “students” in local language Pashto). Most of the Taliban had grown up in refugee camps in Pakistan during the 1980s, and were taught in the Saudi funded Wahhabi *madrassas* religious schools known for teaching orthodox interpretation of Islam. To quote Hussain, “The Taliban inflamed Sunni extremism in Afghanistan and made that country a focal point for religiously inspired terrorism and violence that had repercussions not only for the state but also for the wider arena. Significantly, the example of the Taliban sparked Sunni militancy within Pakistan itself- a state which was regarded as the virtual creator and mentor of the Taliban”.<sup>16</sup> According to Ahmad Rashid, the Taliban were born in Pakistani refugee camps, educated in Pakistani *madrassas* and learnt their fighting skills from *Mujahideen* groups based in Pakistan. In 1997-1998, Pakistan provided the Taliban with an estimated 30 million US dollar aid, which included 600,000 tons of wheat, diesel, petroleum and kerosene fuel, arms and ammunition, aerial bombs, maintenance and spare parts for its Soviet-era military equipment such as tanks and heavy artillery, repairs and maintenance of the Taliban air force and airport operations, road building, electricity supply in Kandahar and salaries.<sup>17</sup> It was during Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto’s second term of office (1993–1996), that Interior Minister General Naseerullah Babar promoted the Taliban.<sup>18</sup> It was a mission planned by the ISI to use the Taliban for their proxy war in Afghanistan. Although the Taliban were condemned internationally for the harsh policies and Islamist extremism, which resulted in the brutal treatment of many Afghans, especially women. But still formal diplomatic recognition of the Taliban government was acknowledged by three countries: Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Pakistan was the first country to recognize the Taliban government and establish formal diplomatic relations, until it was

overthrown by the US and NATO forces post 9/11.

After September 11 attack by Al-Qaeda, United States and their allies give ultimatum to the Taliban to hand over Osama Bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda, which the Taliban refused. Accordingly, US and their allies declared war against terrorism which resulted in the overthrow of the Taliban militant regime. The incident of September eleven, 2001 completely changed the politics of the region. A democratic government was set at Kabul with strong back up of US and NATO forces in order to stabilize Afghanistan. Hamid Karzai was designated as the first president of Afghanistan at the Bonn conference in December 2001.

Karzai tried to develop a neutral policy towards other countries in the region especially Pakistan and India, but soon he was disappointed with Islamabad. Karzai became critical of Pakistan's foreign policy, as he believed that Pakistan supported Taliban in order to destabilize Afghanistan. Notwithstanding Pakistan's denial of any such interference, CIA and NATO officers confirmed the reports about ISI running training camps for Taliban in the north of Quetta and Karachi. The reports also showed that Pakistan artillery gave covering fire to Taliban infiltrators, while crossing into Afghanistan. Medical facilities were also set up close to the border by the army for wounded Taliban.<sup>19</sup> Even Richard Holbrook, the special representative of US in Afghanistan and Pakistan declared that "we are fighting in wrong place with wrong enemy".<sup>20</sup> Not only Holbrook conformed such allegations of Pakistan's interference, but most American officials who worked in Afghanistan certified that Pakistan is a safe haven for Taliban.

#### THE PEACE PROCESS WITH TALIBAN AND ROLE OF PAKISTAN

In early 2002 some Taliban were waiting for some "offer" from Kabul (presumably for power sharing) which never came.<sup>21</sup> The US installed Karzai as the President of Afghanistan in 2001, presuming that the Taliban were completely demolished, and they were no longer seen as a threat to destabilize Afghanistan. This was a huge error in the judgment made by the US and Afghan officials. They not only underestimated the Taliban but also misjudged the role of Pakistan. Once again Taliban with the help of Pakistan renewed their military force and started guerilla warfare against Afghan government and coalition forces. In fact, the year 2008 proved to be the most violent year, registering the highest death toll among US and NATO troops.

In 2010, the peace process was projected as a solution to end the militancy and war in Afghanistan, but Afghan politicians and senior government officials' continued to distrust the activities of Pakistan. The Afghan officials believed that ISI was fully supporting the Taliban militants with artillery and weapons. From 2006-2014, Hamid Karzai continuously sought help from Islamabad for broking peace talks with the Taliban, but with no results due to the lack of cooperation from Pakistan. The attempts made by Karzai failed and he was disappointed with Pakistan. He blamed Pakistan for the chaos engulfing Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup>

As the insurgency mounted after 2003, Karzai sought to bring in 'moderate' Taliban through secret negotiations, but his efforts met with little success. The 'Program for Strengthening Peace' was established in 2005 to attract ranks. In October 2006, about 2,600 fighters had been given certification letters under this scheme. Most of them had not been active since 2001 and were predominantly refugees trying to return to Afghanistan. Karzai made public statements encouraging 'reconciliation'. His much publicized plea in January 2006 asked Mullah Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to return and live in peace, but his gestures could not materialise.<sup>23</sup> Pakistan has a political and geostrategic motive to interfere in Afghanistan. Pakistan holds the key to unlock Afghanistan's war puzzle and pave way for peace. The US also put pressure on Pakistan to contribute actively in Afghanistan peace process. The initiative was developed by the US along with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in 2006.

It was in October 2010, that President Karzai, following rumors about secret peace talks taking place with the Taliban, confirmed in an interview that 'unofficial contacts' with the Taliban 'have been going on for quite some time'. However, he wanted the Taliban to meet some conditions, including the acceptance of constitution, laying down their arms and cutting ties with Al Qaeda".<sup>24</sup>

Karzai went further by announcing that he would in the spring convene a national peace *Jirga*, traditional Afghan assembly, to facilitate high-level talks with the Taliban. Karzai hoped that Saudi Arabia would play a key role in this process.<sup>25</sup> Persuasion of key parties to agree on a peace deal would depend heavily on the shape of the deal itself. The Afghan and US governments called on the insurgents to reject Al Qaeda, lay down their arms, and accept the Afghan constitution. The insurgents demanded the withdrawal of foreign forces, removal of Karzai government, and revision of Afghan constitution to create a "true" Islamic republic.<sup>26</sup> These demands could not be fulfilled as long as Pakistan would not put pressure

on the Taliban to come to the negotiation table. Afghan political activists believe that Afghanistan government needs to negotiate with Pakistan rather than the Taliban.

In April 2008, reconciliation principles were drawn up by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Policy Action Group (PAG). In late 2008, political contacts, hosted by Saudi Arabia, were made between Karzai and Taliban representatives. This was one of the first attempts towards a general settlement but little real progress was made. The US refused to endorse or participate in the meetings. Afghan officials once again claimed that Pakistan was not cooperating in the peace process.

#### THE NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT, 2014

In December 2014, Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai formed the National Unity government along with Abdullah Abdullah. He tried to reach out further to Islamabad for a peace settlement with the Taliban militants. Since coming to power, Ghani has courted Pakistan, expending substantial domestic political capital in the process. Ghani was elected on 21 September 2014, and immediately after resumption of office, the National Unity Government led by Ghani took the rather bold and controversial initiative of adopting a conciliatory approach towards Pakistan in order to secure its cooperation in bringing the Taliban militants to the negotiating table. He also hoped to develop Afghanistan economy by acting as a sort of 'transit corridor' between South and Central Asia.<sup>27</sup>

The idea that peace would not be possible without Pakistan, seems to be dominant among the Afghan politicians. Ghani as head of the National Unity Government took the risk to trust Pakistan, despite criticism from the political analysts. They consider Ghani as "a blind gambler who has lost his political memory". But there is a view that Ashraf Ghani's foreign policy has two angles, political and economic. His political priority is not necessarily peace with the Taliban but a general reconciliation with Pakistan. His broader vision is to build long-term relationship with Pakistan for landlocked Afghanistan, which could act as the hub for an integrated South and Central Asian economy.<sup>28</sup> Ghani wants to achieve economic goals with the help of Pakistan for development of his country.

Ashraf Ghani's peace process is the way to stabilize Afghanistan for peace and development. President Ghani's calculus derives from the same logic that drove Karzai's policy-namely, Pakistan is the problem, and without a change in Pakistan's attitude, Afghanistan will not be

stabilized.<sup>29</sup> Ghani is also following the foot steps of Karzai in his political dealings with Pakistan. But, unlike Karzai, Ghani has repeatedly emphasized that the fundamental problem is not the Taliban insurgency itself but an “undeclared state of hostilities” between Afghanistan and Pakistan. While Karzai tried to shame and push Pakistan into cooperation, Ghani has sought to make it a part of the solution by trying to convincingly address its concerns in relation to Afghanistan in a way that preserves both countries’ interests.<sup>30</sup>

Ghani is aware that in the long run, the country cannot economically sustain such a large force, which continues to be paid for largely by the U.S. military. But the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) can be reduced only if there is an end to the insurgency and the economy insufficiently robust to absorb the demobilized troops. This can be achieved through an effective reconciliation process. So peace with the Taliban is continuing. An initial round of talks in China was followed by a more substantive second round at Murree, a Pakistani resort town near Islamabad. The talks were backed by both Pakistan’s Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Afghan President Ghani, who risked significant political capital in pressing for negotiations with the Taliban and Pakistan. Then it was revealed, that Mohammad Omar, the Taliban’s leader, had been dead for more than two years.<sup>31</sup> His demise put a hold on the peace process and once again it was proved that Pakistan’s has been dishonest in its dealings with Afghanistan. Whereas the Taliban continue creating political tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan, there have been border clashes on the Durand Line which has never been recognized officially by Afghanistan government. In the recent border clash which happened on 6 May 2017, at least 15 people have been killed and dozens others wounded after a cross-border battle between Pakistani and Afghan forces. Officials from both countries confirmed that nine Pakistanis and six Afghans were killed in the clashes, which lasted for several hours.<sup>32</sup> Pakistan and Afghanistan share a roughly 2,500 km-long border and there have been several border clashes along the border.

### CONCLUSION

The foreign policy of Afghanistan towards Pakistan is not explicit and clear. Basically there are three main reasons behind this bewilderment in Afghanistan’s foreign policy. Firstly, Afghanistan is a landlocked country, which makes Afghanistan dependent on Pakistan for import and export.



Pakistan always uses this point to put pressure on Afghanistan. The second reason, which does not let Afghanistan to have its effective foreign policy towards Pakistan, is the issue of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. According to UN, two million Afghan refugees have been living in Pakistan since civil war started in Afghanistan. Pakistan has always been using the case of Afghan refugees as strong point in their policy towards Afghanistan. Pakistani politicians always threaten Afghan officials that they will send back all Afghans refugees. On the other hand, Afghan officials always state that situation is still not favourable for the return the Afghan refugees. The third and the most important factor which makes Afghanistan-Pakistan relations more complex and complicated is Pak sponsored 'Taliban militant groups, which are actively fighting against Afghanistan government with the support of Pakistan. Afghan politicians consider Pakistan as the only way to end up that war in Afghanistan.

Following the collapse of the Taliban regime, the Afghan Government began a proactive policy to strengthen and consolidate its relations with international community. Afghanistan's diplomacy is based on the fundamental beliefs, values and goals, which are anchored in Articles seven and eight of the Constitution of Afghanistan: "The state shall regulate the foreign policy of the country on the basis of preserving the independence, national interests and territorial integrity as well as non-interference, good neighborliness, mutual respect and equality of rights. The state shall observe the United Nations Charter, inter-state agreements, as well as international treaties to which Afghanistan has joined, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights". Because of decades of war and bloodshed in the country, Afghanistan lost its traditionally and conventionally balanced relations with its neighbors. During the recent troubled years, it was often treated as a sub-state entity, rather than an independent and sovereign nation. Since the demise of the Taliban, the Afghan government has sought to change the dynamics of its relations with its neighbors. Afghanistan's foreign policy is now centered on two points. Firstly, Afghanistan wants to be an equal partner; and secondly, Afghanistan wants to be the catalyst for regional cooperation.

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